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While the major purpose was to explore the significance of community organization for school support, a secondary purpose was to demonstrate the practical significance of sociological theory and the survey research technique to educational problems.

Some of the findings were as follows. The level of support which a community accords its schools is related to the social organizational patterns of that community. Support for schools is much more characteristic of formal group members such as those in the PTA, social clubs, and church organizations. The significance of the disinterest and lower level of support among non-group members grows when it is found that they are not in touch with other community members or with mass communication media. It is more difficult to change such disinterest even after it has been detected.

These findings have important implications if one considers present urban migration patterns, millage campaigns, attitudes toward formal organization held by members of a community, and questions of local support versus the establishment of a broader base of school support.

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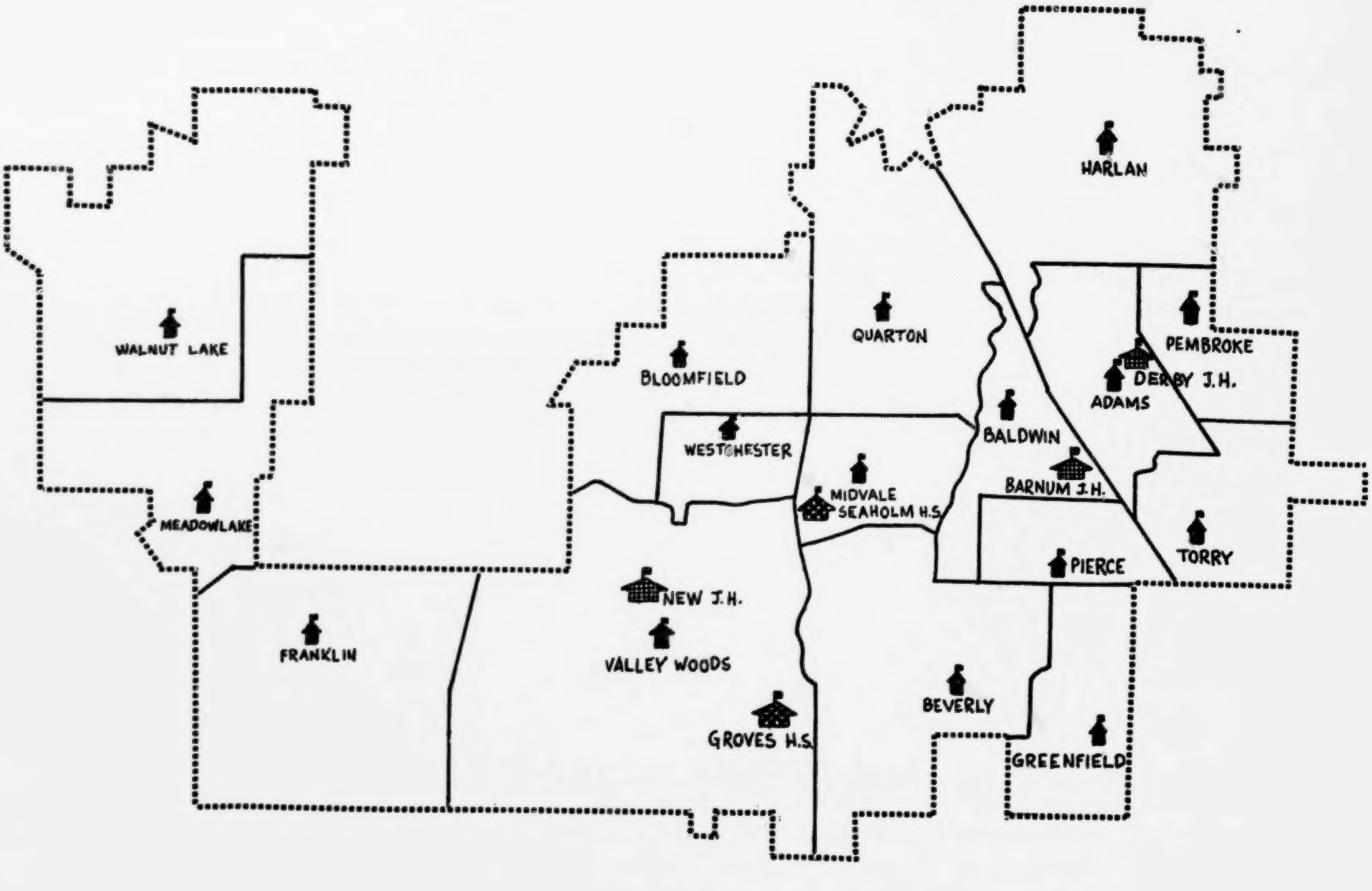

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COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT OF THE SCHOOLS

A Study of Citizen Reaction
to the
Birmingham, Michigan, Public Schools

By

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With a Chapter by
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Birmingham Public Schools

Cooperative Research Project No. 1828

Ypsilanti, Michigan

January 31, 1964

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PREFACE

This study has one major message to convey, and it is this: The level of support which a community accords its schools is locked in the social organizational patterns of the community. Populations vary with respect to the kinds of people of which they are comprised; they also vary in the kinds of interaction patterns which these people evolve. Both of these factors are related to school support.

In the ensuing pages, the manner in which various population characteristics are related to school support is examined. The significance of these variables seems to lie in the fact that they reflect the roles which people play and the needs which arise from playing these roles. For instance, young married people with children enrolled in the public schools are more supportive in their attitudes toward the schools than are the older people whose children have completed their education. Or, people with more education tend to be more supportive of the schools than people with less educational experience.

While the existence of needs may thus be related to the social structural properties of the community, the fulfillment of these needs is associated with the ongoing interaction patterns of the community. For instance, an analysis of formal association membership reveals two distinct population segments; an active, participating segment, and a more isolated, non-participating segment. Support for the schools is much more characteristic of the formal group members, while disinterest and a lower level of support is characteristic of the non-members. The significance of this finding grows in importance when it is found that the anomic segment of the community is not only less in touch with the rest of the community on an interpersonal basis, but with respect to being in contact with the mass media as well. Non-members do not read their local newspapers as frequently as members, nor do they pay as much attention to direct mail sent by the public school. Therefore, disinterest and opposition which arises in this isolated segment of the community should not only be more difficult to detect, it should also be more difficult to enlighten and to change.

The unanswered questions raised by this study are numerous. To begin with, it must be emphasized that the study was conducted in an atypical community. Birmingham, Michigan is an upper status suburban community. However, the emphasis in the analysis rests upon the relational aspects of social organization and school support. Moreover, the nature of the relationships are, for the most part, consistent with sociological expectations, and in a direction consistent with related kinds of research in other settings. Therefore, to the extent that similar relationships occur between social organization and school support in other communities, the following questions might well be raised.

1. Since school support is directly related to personal or familial use of school facilities or programs, how can local support continue to be mustered as a community's population ages and a larger proportion of the people fall into the older age brackets?

2. Closely related to the above question is one concerning the advisability of broadening the school program to serve a larger proportion of the citizens of the community. For instance, would a community-school type of program muster support from people who are currently non-users of school facilities and who are non-supportive? Would a broadened program serve to involve many people who are not presently active in ongoing activities, thereby contributing to the over all integration of the community?

3. What is the effect of present urban migration patterns upon support for the schools in central city and in suburban areas? It is known that people moving to the suburbs tend to be a highly select group, heavily represented by young child-rearing couples of higher educational and income levels. The residual population in inner city areas therefore tends to be over-represented by older couples, by

single people, and by people of lower educational and income levels. In brief, present migration patterns are such as to suggest that the most supportive people are moving to the suburban areas, leaving behind in central city a population which is less supportive of the schools. Will this mean that suburban area schools will thrive, while central city schools will experience harder times? And what of the Negro children who must remain behind in central city because of restrictive housing policies in the suburbs? Will these children be disadvantaged by this combination of social phenomena?

4. Another problem raised by this analysis concerns the approach which school public relations men take during millage campaigns. If opposition and disinterest is anchored in the anomic segment of the society, the outlook should be a bit grim. How does one communicate with and "change the attitudes" of people who have few interpersonal contacts in the community, who do not read the newspapers as much as those who are more integrated, and who pay not as much attention to their direct mail? In brief, should the millage campaign be directed to informing and changing attitudes of the anomic segment, or in activating and reinforcing the integrated members of the community?

5. A problem which seems worthy of mention at this point concerns the role of formal association members in general, and P.T.A. members in particular. American culture is laden with both humor and epithets which are not infrequently directed toward the P.T.A. and toward social clubs and card clubs. Since it is easy to drift with the current of popular notions, it is quite possible that the significance of these groups is being overlooked. The P.T.A. not only serves as a rallying point for supportive school values in Birmingham, it is an affiliation which predicts high activity at the polls on election days. In second position behind the P.T.A. members are members of social clubs and card clubs. These and other formal organizations apparently serve not only as sources of supportive attitudes toward the schools, but the concensus thereby arrived at spurs these people to express their values in a concrete manner on election day.

6. Perhaps the most general and major problem raised by this analysis involves the fact that local communities all over the nation vary considerably in their social organization. To the extent that school support is anchored in community organization this means that great variations will occur between communities in the level of support which the schools receive. This of course means that purely local

> support for the schools can only perpetuate gross inequalities in educational opportunities for children. For specific communities it also means that as the composition of the population changes, educational opportunities will increase or decline, according to the nature of the changes which occur in the social organization of the community.
>
> In a related manner, it is also possible that certain migration patterns may bear a relationship to already existing patterns of community organization. For instance, the migration of young child-rearing couples to suburban areas may be further increased by the fact that the younger people in such areas are already supporting good schools. In addition, the avoidance of inner city areas by young child-rearing couples may in part be encouraged by the less attractive school facilities in this zone. It is interesting to note that in the suburb of Birmingham, 82 per cent of the people are of the opinion that the existence of good schools is an important factor in attracting new residents to this community.

While the major purpose of this study has been to explore the significance of community organization for school support, a secondary objective has been to demonstrate the practical significance of sociological theory and the survey research technique applied to educational problems. In brief, the following study represents a close collaborative effort on the part of professional educators, laymen, and a research team. A common conviction has bound these efforts; the conviction that theoretically sound and accurately gathered data, when intelligently applied, can do a great deal to increase the efficiency and to further democratize the operation of the public schools.

Although great importance may be assigned to a careful and accurate compiling of research data, a factor of equal importance is the use that is made of the data when they are turned over to the school authorities. In spite of the fact that the Armed Services, government bureaus, business, and industry have acquired considerable experience in the utilization of survey research data, such practical knowledge is relatively undeveloped in the public school setting. We are therefore understandably gratified to have witnessed a sophisticated application of the data in this survey by the Birmingham School administrators, Board, and citizens groups. More specifically we feel that the data were put to commendable use through such procedures as:

1. Treating the data in an open and democratic manner . . . communicating findings back to the community via a cooperative press and through public discussion.
2. Placing data in the hands of citizens groups for discussion and advice relative to significant school problems.
3. Sincere consideration for the wishes of the people (as empirically documented) in the planning of new school programs and policies.

Since it is apparent that significant use of research data is a matter of great importance, and a domain in itself, Mr. Walter Piel, Administrative Assistant in the Birmingham Public Schools, joined this team at the beginning of the project. Thus the group which is responsible for this study was composed of two sociologists, a social worker, and an educational administrator. The sociologists and social worker contributed the theory, research design, and technical execution of the study. The educational administrator provided orientation to significant problems around which the research design was built. He also fed back data to the school system so that immediate use was made of the research data in curriculum planning, the school building program, public relations, the millage campaign, and in other areas. These contributions are described by Mr. Piel in Chapter 3 of this report.

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Under Mrs. Dorothea Humphrey's direction and coordination, the interviewing staff fulfilled its role in a most efficient manner. To Mrs. James H. Smith we extend our thanks for diligence and devotion to the coding operation. To Tony and Doug Smith we express our gratitude for clerical assistance and for the graphic presentation included in this report. To Mrs. Jane Hays our deepest gratitude for an excellent job of typing, cheerfully done.

We would like to express our appreciation to the editors and staff of the Birmingham Eccentric who handled data from the study with unusual insight and complete integrity. We wish to commend Mr. George Averill, Mr. Paul Averill, Mr. William Averill, and Mr. Ken Weaver for the highly constructive

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To our wives, Jo, Millie, and Nana, our affectionate thanks for the kind of understanding and assistance which is so vital to husbands who wish to do research.

Last but not least, we wish to thank the citizens of Birmingham, whose interest and cooperation made this study a rewarding experience.

R. V. Smith
Stan Flory
Rashid Bashshur

Ypsilanti, Michigan
January 31, 1964

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	. . . .	i
Introduction	. . . .	1
Chapter I	A Theory of School Support	5
Chapter II	Population Characteristics and School Support	23
Chapter III	The Use of Survey Research Data, by Walter Piel, Administrative Assistant, Birmingham Public Schools . . .	45
Chapter IV	Contrived and Natural Changes in Level of Support	63
Chapter V	The Significance of Formal Association Membership	85
Chapter VI	Summary and Conclusions	120
Appendix A		
Appendix B		

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 2-1: Stated Voting Activity, and Supportiveness for Millage Proposals, by Length of Residence in the Community . . . 29

Figure 2-2: Index of Millage Support, by Age of Youngest Child 30

Figure 2-3: Voting Activity, by Age of Youngest Child 30

Figure 2-4: Index of Millage Support, by Home Ownership Status . . . 32

Figure 2-5: Stated Voting Activity, by Home Ownership Status 32

Figure 2-6: Index of Millage Support, by Sex 33

Figure 2-7: Voting Activity, by Sex 33

Figure 2-8: Index of Millage Support, by Educational Experience . . . 34

Figure 2-9: Voting Activity, by Educational Experience 34

Figure 2-10: Index of Millage Support, by Occupation 36

Figure 2-11: Voting Activity, by Occupation 36

Figure 2-12: Summary of Attitudinal Support and Voting Activity by Social Categories 38

Figure 2-13: Summary of Attitudinal Rejection and Voting Activity, by Social Categories 39

Figure 2-14: Levels of Support for Building Needs, by General Population, and by Registered Voters 41

Figure 2-15: Manifest and Latent Support for an Operational Millage Issue 42

Figure 2-16: Index of Millage Support, by General Population and by Registered Voters 43

Figure 2-17: Index of Millage Support, by Active and Inactive Registered Voters 44

Figure 2-18: Index of Millage Support: by General Population, by All Registered Voters, and by Active Registered Voters . . . 44

LIST OF TABLES

Page

Table 4-1: Opinions About How Well School Funds Are Used 65

Table 4-2: Opinions of the Building Program of the Past Ten Years . 66

Table 4-3: Perceptions of Change in the School Building Policies ... 67

Table 4-4: Perception of Efforts Made to Keep the Community Informed about School Affairs 67

Table 4-5: Impressions of Calls Made by the Citizen's Committee .. 69

Table 4-6: Factors Which New Registrants Recall Having Helped Them Decide to Register for the School Elections 70

Table 4-7: Number of New Registrants between June and November: 1961-63 71

Table 4-8: Family Composition, Age, Family Income, and Home Ownership Status, by Residence Location in the Detroit Metropolitan Area 73

Table 4-9: Per Cent Distribution of White Adults whose Annual Family Income Totals $5000 or More, by Residence Location, and by Family Life Cycle Stage............... 75

Table 4-10: Social Characteristics of Old and New Birmingham Residents 77

Table 4-11: Behavior of Persons who Say They Voted in the November, 1961 Millage Election, by Old and New Birmingham Residents.......................... 78

Table 4-12: Distribution of Respondents in Three Samples, by Length of Residence in the Area, and by Home Ownership 79

Table 4-13: Distribution of Respondents in Three Samples, by Age of Respondent, and by Age of Youngest Child 80

Table 4-14: Distribution of Respondents in Three Samples, by Educational Level, and by Income 81

Table 4-15: Stated Voting Behavior in the November, 1961 Election .. 82

Table 5-1: Membership and Activity in Formal Associations, and Subscription to or Regular Reading of the Local Newspaper 90

LIST OF TABLES (cont.)

Page

Table 5-2: Membership and Activity in Formal Associations, and Awareness of Receiving Literature by Direct Mail from the Birmingham Public Schools 90

Table 5-3: Membership and Activity in Formal Associations, and Reading of Literature Sent by the Public Schools 91

Table 5-4: Membership and Activity in Formal Associations, and Impressions of the School Building Program of the Past Ten Years 92

Table 5-5: Membership and Activity in Formal Associations, and Attitudes Toward Money Spent on Special Facilities Such as Libraries, Gymnasiums, and Pools 93

Table 5-6: Membership and Activity in Formal Associations, and Opinions about How Well School Funds are Used 94

Table 5-7: Membership and Activity in Formal Associations, and Awareness of New Elementary Construction During the Past Seven Months 95

Table 5-8: Membership and Activity in Formal Associations, and Opinions about the New Elementary Buildings Constructed in the Past Seven Months 96

Table 5-9: Membership and Activity in Formal Associations, and Impressions of Improvements in the School Building Program of the Past Two Years 97

Table 5-10: Membership and Activity in Formal Associations, and Vote Cast for the School Building Program 98

Table 5-11: Membership and Activities in Formal Associations, and Vote Cast for the Operating Millage 99

Table 5-12: Membership in Formal Associations, and Subscription to the Local Newspaper 101

Table 5-13: Membership in Formal Associations, and Recollection of Having Received Direct Mail from the Public Schools During the Past Year 102

Table 5-14: Membership in Formal Associations, and Reading of Literature Sent by Direct Mail by the Birmingham Public Schools 103

LIST OF TABLES (cont.)

Page

Table 5-15: Membership in Formal Associations and Attitudes Toward the School Building Program of the Past Ten Years 105

Table 5-16: Membership in Formal Associations, and Impressions of Amount of Money Spent on Special Facilities as Libraries, Gymnasiums, and Pools 106

Table 5-17: Membership in Formal Associations and Impressions of How Well the Local School Funds are Used 107

Table 5-18: Membership in Formal Associations by Awareness of New Elementary Construction of the Past Seven Months 108

Table 5-19: Membership in Formal Associations and Attitudes Toward the New Elementary Buildings Constructed in the Past Seven Months 109

Table 5-20: Membership in Formal Associations and Feelings About Improvements in the School Building Program During the Past Two Years 110

Table 5-21: Membership in Formal Associations, by Support for Operating Millage 112

Table 5-22: Membership in Formal Associations, by Support for Building Proposal 113

Table 5-23: Index of Millage Support, by Religious Preference 115

Table 5-24: Voting Activity, by Religious Preference 115

Table 5-25: Index of Millage Support, for Catholic Affiliators, and for Respondents with and without Children Under 18 Years of Age 116

Table 5-26: Child Enrollment and Stated Voting Response to the Operational Millage Proposal in the November, 1961 School Election 117

Table 5-27: Child Enrollment and Stated Voting Response to the Bond Proposition in the November, 1961 School Election 118

INTRODUCTION: WHY A STUDY?

Since the time when our ancestors clearly saw the importance of public education, our population structure has changed in a striking manner making it increasingly difficult for policy makers to accurately assess the changing needs of education. In part the difficulty stems from the fact that 170 years ago our patterns of social life were predominantly rural, while today they are predominantly urban in character. In 1790 approximately 95 per cent of our population was rural, whereas only 8 per cent of our total population earns a livelihood on farms today. The socioeconomic base of the United States has changed from one predominantly rural to one predominantly urban.

When the meaning of such a phenomenon is translated into the basic problems of democratic school administration, we are confronted with the fact that school boards and administrators face severe difficulties in obtaining adequate factual knowledge about the population they serve. In the small rural community of a few generations ago everyone tended to know and to communicate with nearly everyone else, and common understandings concerning the needs and opinions of the population were more easily achieved. In the urban community of today life is so highly specialized and the population is so large that any one city dweller can meet and interact with only a very small proportion of the whole population of his community. Moreover, the people any one individual interacts with in the course of a given day tend to be persons of quite similar social characteristics. Thus school board members and administrators cannot maintain direct communication with the whole population, but are normally in contact with a limited and specialized segment of that population. However, the duties and responsibilities of school officials are to the broad and heterogeneous population if the intention of democratic education is to be fulfilled.

It is in this setting that most school officials strive to administer to the needs of the whole population they serve. Their problem is not one of intention so much as it is a problem of method. For in every urban community certain select segments of the population are more articulate, better organized, or have better opportunities to present their views to policy makers than do other segments. For instance, what meaning does a school trustee assign to six telephone calls urging the adoption of a given school policy ? Do these six calls represent 1 per cent, 30 per cent, or 90 per cent of the people's views on that issue ? If the policy maker should decide that these calls represent the views of "most" of the people, when in fact they definitely do not, then a policy might be instituted which would be contrary to the wishes of the majority.

It is interesting to speculate about the numerous millage failures which have recently beset so many of our public school systems. Would these issues have failed if accurate communication from the people to the policy makers had occurred over the course of time ? If is our conviction that the millage issue is but one of several indexes of the level of a continuing relationship which exists between the people of the community and their schools. When the level of that relationship is "high" (i.e., when most school policies and procedures are acceptable to a majority of the people), support at the polls is commonplace. When the level of that relationship has become "low", support is denied. Some communities, we have found, tend to underestimate the level of their support, and as a result school programs do not receive the backing which the community is willing to give. In other communities, the support is overestimated and millage failure results. In brief, it is highly important to have accurate knowledge about how the various groups which comprise the population feel about the various aspects of the school program . . . and why.

It should be emphasized, however, that knowledge of community opinion in no way removes the responsibility of the policy maker to render personal decisions. Rather than supplanting decision making functions, such data merely enhance the possibility for the decisions to be more equitable and adaptive.

Communication as a two-way channel

While it has long been recognized that increased communication between the schools and the community is desirable, it is interesting to note that the attention of most school public relations departments has thus far been directed primarily to the problem of communication from the schools to the community. The importance of the community-to-school channel has not been adequately recognized and/or dealt with. The few efforts which have been made to increase community-to-school communication suffer from the characteristic of non-representativeness. For instance, people who belong to P.T.A. groups, who volunteer for work on citizen's committees, or communicate with policy makers in other ways constitute a select, rather than a representative cross section of the whole population. Hence their views and opinions are not likely to accurately reflect the thinking of the entire community.[1]

In brief, communication between the schools and the community is a two-way channel. While great progress has been made in enhancing the flow of communication from the schools to the community, a great deal needs to be done to provide an accurate and representative flow of information from the community to the schools. A representative flow of communication from the people to school policy makers is essential in our urban society if the public schools are to function efficiently and democratically.

---

[1] This fact, incidentally, is not to deny the extreme value of such groups in the conduct of school affairs. This is only to say that in utilizing such groups it is well to bear in mind their selective nature.

While it is important for representative information to be received from the people in the community, it is also important that this information be analyzed in such a manner that it assumes meaningful patterns. The kinds of satisfactions and dissatisfactions which occur must be tied to the structure and organization of the community. For instance, approximately half of the people in Birmingham with opinions on the issue felt that the schools should be run on a year-round basis to better utilize the school plant. However, when the factor of parental status was held constant, it was found that people who had children enrolled in the schools roundly rejected the 12 month plan. Support stemmed largely from those citizens who had no children enrolled in the schools. This analysis prompted the local newspaper to comment in its editorial columns that ". . . the issue is now resolved". The year-round school plan was at once dropped as an issue in this community.

Some broader implications of social organization for school problems are presented in the ensuing pages. Therefore, suffice it for now to say that information communicated from a population to school policy makers requires placement in the context of the community's organization.

CHAPTER 1

A THEORY OF SCHOOL SUPPORT

Communities differ considerably in the extent to which they support their public schools. One community may provide solid financial backing for school programs and school buildings and have a high incidence of participation in school affairs, while another community may display quite the opposite behavior. If such phenomena are to be adequately comprehended and systematically researched, a theory of school support must be advanced. Such a theory, it would seem, needs logically to consist of two major parts; first, a definition of support, and secondly, a description of those factors or forces which are related to support.

The ensuing theory is offered as a simple beginning. The conceptualization of school support which it employs makes a basic distinction between attitudes and overt acts. Out of the myriads of factors which might be seized upon as bearing a relationship to support, social organization has been singled out as a unifying principle. While this conceptualization is simple, it bears a direct relationship to a body of relevant sociological facts, and has proven to be of utility in this study.

I. SCHOOL SUPPORT

For scientific purposes the notion of school support must first be limited to specific issues or areas of support, and also limited to specific points in time. Therefore, when we ask if a community is supportive of its schools we must clarify by asking, "supportive with respect to what, under what circumstances, and when?" Perhaps at some future date it will be possible to provide a general index of school support, but for the moment it appears advisable to limit the problem of school support to specific issues. In this manner we may conceive of support for a given type of curriculum. . . support for a specific millage issue. . . or support for a given kind of athletic policy.

Having localized the conception of support to specific issues, three basic things now need to be observed about support: 1) it exists at a given level at a given point in time, 2) this level may be viewed and measured in both a latent and a manifest form, and 3) level of support represents a resultant of community forces. (see diagram A, p. 9)

Two Conceptualizations of Support: Manifest and Latent

The degree to which a community is supportive of given school issues or programs may be conceived to exist at a given level at a given point in time, and as ranging between the polar extremes of very high to very low. This notion of support, however, needs further elucidation.

On the one hand, level of support may be conceived as a precondition on the part of a population to respond in a given manner toward specific issues or situations relative to school matters.

On the other hand, level of support may be conceived to exist in the overt acts of a population relative to school issues or situations. This would include such acts as participating in school affairs, or voting in school elections.

While these two aspects of supportiveness are definitely related, their analysis and theoretical treatment demand separate consideration. This distinction helps to emphasize a very basic problem: communities may provide latent, but not manifest support for the schools. It is quite possible for a community to have a large proportion of people who are generally favorable in their attitudes toward the schools (a high latent level), but who do not vote in millage elections (a low manifest level). A comparison of manifest level of support with latent level of support is obviously an important datum for the school policy maker as well as the social scientist.

Support as a Resultant of Forces

With respect to both manifest and latent reactions, the particular level of support which a given community accords any school issue represents a resultant of forces which impinge upon that issue at a given point in time. Some of these forces may be conceived to be positive in nature, since they tend to increase the level of support; some are negative in nature and tend to depress the level of support.

For instance, the vote cast in a given millage election constitutes a direct measure of manifest support, while a measure of the attitudes of all of the potential voters in the school district toward that same millage issue would be a measure of latent support. Both the actual vote cast (showing manifest level), as well as the potential vote (latent level), may be viewed as resulting from constellations of forces in the community, some of which are negative, and some of which are positive.

Any changes which occur in either the manifest or the latent level of support therefore represent modifications in the equilibrium which exists between the positive and the negative forces. Non-change in the level of support indicates that no modifications have occurred in the distribution of negative and positive forces, or that any increase or decrease in positive forces has been accompanied by a parallel increase or decrease in negative forces.[1]

---

[1] See Kurt Lewin's discussion of quasi-stationary equilibria and the problem of permanent change, in "Group Decision and Social Change", in Readings in Social Psychology, 3rd ed., ed. by Newcomb, Maccoby and Hartley (New York, Henry Holt, 1958), pp. 207-8.

II. FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH LEVEL OF SUPPORT: THE RELEVANCE OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The basic problem posed by the above analysis is this: What variables, if increased, lead to an increase in the level of community support?

Considerable research in social psychology offers the important information that individual attitudes are anchored in the social norms of groups. The groups to which an individual belongs, in which he communicates and interacts, and the groups with which he identifies, are the dynamic sources of attitude perseveration and change. Supplementing this knowledge is information gathered by sociologists that attitudes and behaviors of people in a community can be explained by the structure and organizational patterns of the community. For instance, voting behavior studies have consistently revealed that factors such as income, education, occupation, race, religious affiliation, formal group membership, and so forth bear a definite relationship to political attitudes and to voting behavior.

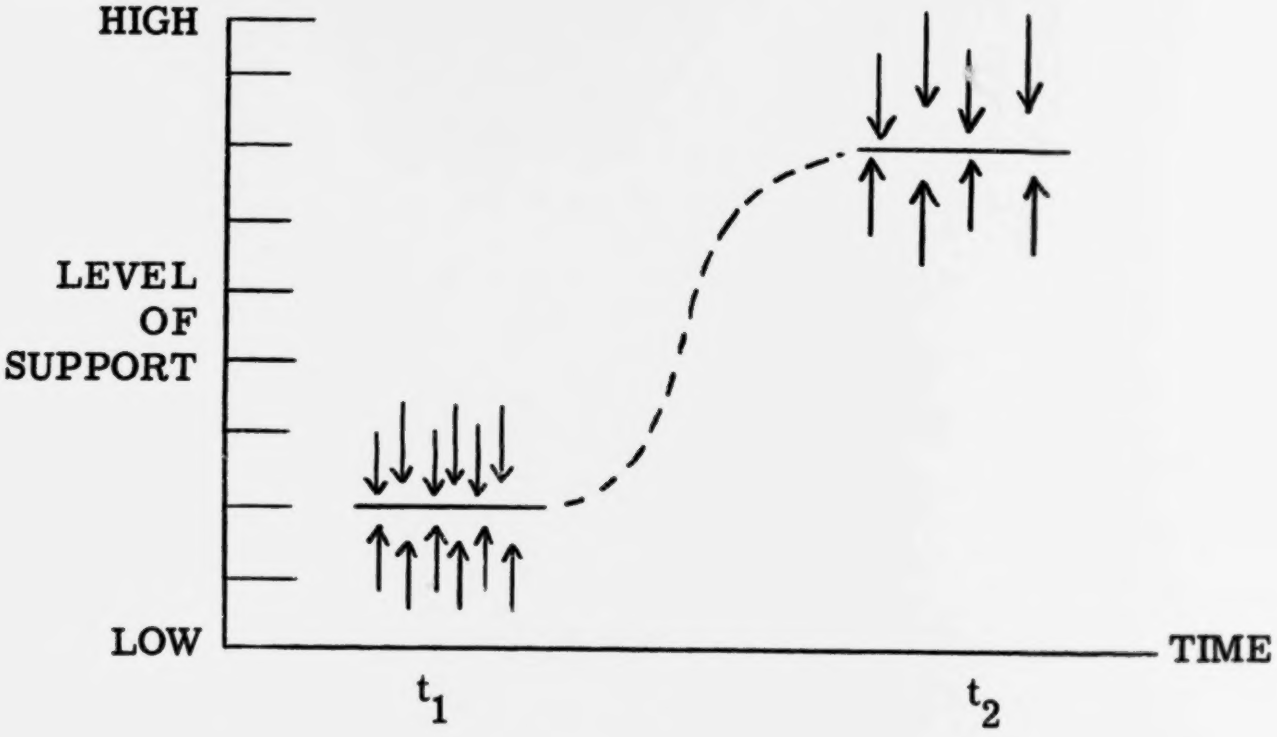
It is the latter domain which receives major emphasis in this analysis, since it is felt that a careful consideration of the multitudinous sociological factors which relate to level of support for the schools is a logical starting point. Knowledge of the structure and organization of the community not only provides data of immediate theoretical and pragmatic interest, but such data provide a background which helps to more sharply define significant problem areas for later social psychological research.

Thus it is herein assumed that the level of both manifest and latent support which a community renders its public schools varies according to the social organizational properties of the community. More specifically, behavior and attitudes toward the schools will vary with such factors as income, education, religious affiliation, occupation, life cycle stage, formal association membership, informal group affiliation, and so forth.

The particular facets of social organization with the greatest relevance

Diagram A

FACTORS INFLUENCING
EQUILIBRIUM OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT



The degree to which a community is supportive of its schools is conceived as existing at a given level at a given point in time, and as ranging between polar extremes of very high and very low. A given level of support indicates a resultant of community forces. Some of these forces are positive in nature, since they tend to increase the level of support; some are negative in nature and tend to depress the level of support. The present study concentrates on those forces extant in community structure which tend to increase or decrease the level of support.

For instance, the increased level of support for the schools between time period 1 (t_1) and time period 2 (t_2) in the above diagram might be attributable to a marked increase in the proportion of people in the population with pre-school age children, an increase in the proportion of college educated persons, and a decrease in the rate of residential mobility.

for school support is a topic which must now be considered. Two major points seem important. First, an analysis of population characteristics should be useful, since these variables reflect community needs and provide some clues to potential support. Secondly, the extent to which people interact in different group settings to solve problems is a factor of great importance.

Structural Properties of the Community Reflect Needs

Communities differ with respect to the kinds of people which comprise them. Moreover, these variations in social structural properties are of considerable importance for school support. The major significance of population characteristics probably lies in the fact that they provide some indication of the kinds of roles which people play in the community, and thereby indicate something about the needs which people experience as they play these roles. For instance, if a community has a high proportion of young married child-rearing couples, we might anticipate that this segment of the population would reflect the need for good school programs If we also find that the education and income levels of these young child-rearers is high, we might anticipate that these latter characteristics would further increase the need for good schools.

Knowledge of the relationship of population composition to school support is therefore of importance to the school administrator in predicting future school support, and in planning future school programs. For instance, if the community's population shows a steady increase in the proportion of people in older age brackets, then decreased support at the polls might be anticipated. Careful attention paid to such data could provide an alert school administrator with an opportunity to make an adjustive move . . . perhaps a broadened school program, one designed to fulfill more community needs.

In brief, the social characteristics of a community's population constitute useful data in comprehending school support and in anticipating future changes in support.

Formal Group Activities

Man is basically a collective problem solving animal. Hence, as needs arise in a population, there occurs collective effort to solve these problems and provide mutual support. It therefore happens that aside from the usual institutional activities of a community, a great deal of interaction and communication among citizens occurs in the framework of formal associations. Such groups are characteristically those with ongoing programs, with specific goals and objectives, a set of rules or by-laws, and with specific offices. The Masons, the Elks, the Kiwanis or Rotary, the P.T.A., Senior Citizens, and countless other such organizations constitute formal associations. In contrast, much of a community's interaction and communication patterns involve less formal circumstances. For instance, family get-togethers, associating with co-workers after work hours, evenings spent with friends, and neighborhood parties all constitute informal group activities.

While both formal and informal group activities are of considerable importance as sources of support or resistance for various school issues, primary consideration is herein given to the formal association. First of all, the formal association is a medium in which the leadership of the community is often exerted. Secondly, the lines of communication from the formal association to informal groups are apparently quite strong. For instance, it has been found that people who interact in formal group settings also tend to experience more informal group contacts as well.[2] Formal associations provide a major index of the extent to which people interact and discuss issues, reinforce values, and evolve solutions for certain community problems.

It might be assumed that while the social structural properties of the community determine the range, or the potential limits of support for the schools, the point upon this range where the actual support level falls is at least partially determined by ongoing group activities. It is not enough to know what kinds of population characteristics give rise to what sorts of needs; we must also know the extent to which people are organized for purposes of fulfilling these needs.

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[2] Morris Axelrod, "A Study of Formal and Informal Group Participation in a Large Urban Community" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1953)

The Significance of Anomic and Integrated Segments of the Community

Thus far it has been observed that the dynamics of community life are such that settings are provided by both formal and informal groups where citizens interact and communicate concerning personal needs and local issues. In these settings, information is exchanged, and a sharpening and focusing upon certain issues occurs. Consensual validity for certain attitudes may therein be provided, and appropriate responses to situations may be resolved. Since membership in formal associations also predicts more frequent interaction in informal settings as well, some sociologists have come to regard formal association membership as an index of community integration.[3] Therefore, a community in which a large proportion of the population participates in local affairs through membership in formal groups may be viewed as an integrated community. Contrariwise, a community in which a relatively small proportion of the people belong to formal associations may be viewed as an anomic community.

With respect to any single community, it may also be observed that two major segments of its population may be delineated; an integrated segment, composed of those who participate in formal group activities, and an anomic segment, composed of non-members of formal groups. Thus a pertinent question is raised. Is there a relationship between degree of community integration and degree of support for the public schools? Under what circumstances

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3. See Basil G. Zimmer and Amos H. Hawley, "The Significance of Membership in Associations", American Journal of Sociology, LXV No. 2 (September, 1959), P. 196.

is the anomic segment of the community supportive (or rejective) of certain school issues; under what circumstances is the integrated segment supportive (or rejective) of the same school issues?

If opposition to the schools arises from the integrated segment of the population, this would seem to be quite a different matter than when opposition arises in the anomic segment.

The nature of opposition from the integrated segment of the community holds these distinct possibilities. First, we could anticipate more open discussion of the issues, a more widespread exchange of information and views, together with a certain sharpening and focusing upon the issues. Next, we might anticipate that the consensual validity which group discussion adds to attitudes would leave the organized segment more prone to act on these views by voting in school elections.

Perhaps of greatest importance, however, is the fact that opposition which is rooted in the organized segment of the community should be more amenable to change than the anomic segment. To begin with, the integrated segment exists in the mainstream of communication. Moreover, school board members and administrators are likely to be members of formal associations, hence are usually aware of group consensus about school issues. They are very often in a position to make some adjustments to the views expressed by formal group members. Once these adjustments have been made, news of the changes can be communicated back to the formal associations quite readily.

The nature of opposition from the anomic segment of the community holds quite different possibilities. First, this segment lies outside the mainstream of the community's communication channels, and the nature and extent of its opposition is not likely to be known. Moreover, we should anticipate less awareness and fewer discriminations about school issues on the part of the anomic segment of the population. Next, we should expect that the consensual validity which the integrated citizens experience with respect to their school attitudes is more lacking with the anomic people. Therefore, the anomic segment should not be expected to express views at the polls as frequently as the more integrated segment.

Of greatest importance, however, is the fact that the anomic segment is less amenable to change. Lying outside the main currents of community interaction and communication, opposition from this source is harder to detect, more difficult to make adjustments to, and more difficult to appraise of basic changes in school policies once they are made.

For the preceding reasons it is assumed that support for the public schools is more likely to emanate from the integrated segment of the community than from the anomic segment. While it is recognized that opposition may well arise from formal association members, such opposition should prove to be more open, more easily detected, and should provide for greater adjustive opportunities on the part of school officials. In contrast, anomic opposition which stems from the more isolated members of the community should not only be more difficult to identify, it should be more difficult to make adjustments to, or to apprise of adjustments once they have been made. Therefore the anomic type of opposition should assume a more insidious and chronic quality than opposition offered by the "organized" segment.

One last comment about anomic opposition appears in order. This is to mention the possibility that upon certain occasions the more anomic members of a community may organize an ephemeral "protest group" to run an opposition campaign against a millage proposal. In such situations the degree of their success would seem to lie largely in the extent of anomie in the community and the degree to which they are able to rally the anomic people into action on election day. Paradoxically, this is a situation which leads the more isolated members of the community into a less anomic position.

In the ensuing report the reader will find that chapters 2 and 4 are devoted to an analysis of the significance of population characteristics for level of school support. The extent to which population characteristics reflect varying degrees of support for different school issues is analyzed in these chapters. The relevance of formal association membership is then considered in Chapter 5. In this chapter a basic proposition is examined, namely, that greater support for the schools exists among integrated members of the community than among anomic members. Chapter 5 also examines the corolary proposition that disinterest and opposition to the schools is more characteristic of the isolated and anomic community members than it is of the more integrated citizens.

III. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The research site of Birmingham, Michigan is a suburban community located in the northern fringe area of Metropolitan Detroit, about 15 miles away from the central business district. The city's population of 25,525 (1960 Census) is predominantly upper middle to upper class, as is much of the population in surrounding areas such as Bloomfield Hills. The universe in this study, however, consists of all adult residents living in the Birmingham School District--an area consisting of the City of Birmingham and some surrounding areas. The total school district population numbered approximately 50,000 in 1963.

In 1960 the Birmingham School Board authorized a study of community-school relations in their school district. It was felt that data from such a study could be used to help increase the efficiency of the school operation, and to further democratize the community-school relationship. One of the objectives of this first survey was to discover what differences exist between people who: 1) register and vote in school elections, 2) register, but don't vote, and 3) don't register. This problem, and others, prompted a research design utilizing two samples . . a sample of registered voters, and a sample of all adult residents living in the school district. Both of these samples were scientifically drawn probability samples.

Data from this survey indicated that the major source of dissatisfaction expressed by residents of the community centered around the past school building program. A rather large proportion of the citizens felt that the school buildings were too fancy . . . contained too many "frills". Closely allied to this finding was the discovery that the people of the community would be willing to support a millage proposal to finance operational needs, but a millage request for new buildings would run into considerable opposition. The millage proposal which was placed before the public six months later was an operational request. Citizens groups utilizing the survey data conducted a millage campaign which included efforts to get attitudinally supportive, but non-registered citizens to the polls. Through the newspapers and by direct mail efforts were made to let the public know that the school building program was under study. Both before and after the election, changes in school design for new buildings was communicated to the public via the newspapers and by direct mail.

The present (1962) study was undertaken as a follow-up to the 1961 survey. Aided by a grant from the Cooperative Research Program of the U. S. Office of education, it permitted further analysis of the data gathered in 1961, and a more thorough approach to the whole problem of the relationship between social organization and community support of the public schools. This study employed three samples in its design: a sample of all registered voters, a sample of all adults residing in the Birmingham School District, and a sample of newly registered voters. The latter sample was introduced in order to gather relevant information concerning differences which might occur between the old registered voters and the new ones. This, of course, would provide some clues into possible future changes in support for the schools, and factors which contribute to such changes.

The basic objectives of this study therefore involved a search for sources of both manifest and latent public support for the local schools, as well as an ascertainment of the results of a campaign to mobilize certain segments of the population to register and get to the polls. Hence, three independent probability samples were employed in order to encompass the varied analyses of this research. Since the procedures which were used varied from one sample to the other, each sample will be described separately.

A. The Sample of All Registered Voters: A simple random sample was drawn from voter registration lists in the 13 precincts of the Birmingham School District. A total of 210 names were selected. Of these, 160 resulted in completed interviews.

It is important to recognize both the advantages and the difficulties involved in the utilization of samples drawn from voter registration files. To begin with, only a select segment of the population registers to vote, thus such samples are not representative of the entire adult population of the community. Secondly, voter registration files are notoriously difficult to keep up to date and a high proportion of the people drawn from such files will have moved. In this study, 32 out of 210 randomly selected persons (15 per cent of the sample representing all registered voters) moved either out of the Birmingham area, or to unknown locations during a period of one year.

The advantage of a voter registration sample in the present design lies in its utility for comparative analyses. For instance, it permits the observation of ways in which registered voters differ from the general population, and it also permits analysis of differences between people who register and vote, and those who register but don't vote.

B. The sample of new registrants: Another simple random sample was drawn from a specially prepared list of all people who had registered between June and November of 1961. This special sample, consisting of 176 cases, constitutes one-third of all persons who registered to vote during the period of a registration campaign conducted by a 750 man volunteer citizens committee. The purpose of the campaign was to implement the second part of a three-stage action research program. The first part of the program involved the definition of attitudinally supportive groups in the community who are not behaviorally active, i.e., not registered to vote. The third stage concerns the evaluation of the effectiveness of the campaign which utilized the research findings.

Of the 176 people who were selected, 132 resulted in completed interviews. Here again, we find a large proportion, 17 per cent or 30 people, who moved either out of the Birmingham area or to unknown locations.

C. The sample of the general population: The entire adult (21 years and over) population in the Birmingham School District was represented by a multi-stage probability sample of 536 dwelling units. This sample yielded 490 completed interviews.

Two types of areas were delineated on a map covering the entire school district: (a) an area that is covered by the city directory which includes the City of Birmingham plus a few contiguous areas, and (b) an area not covered by the city directory including the Village of Franklin and the Walnut Lake area. Whereas area (a) was represented by a simple random sample of dwelling units, area (b) was represented by an "area" probability sample of clusters of dwelling units. A careful check of results obtained in the second part of this sample revealed considerable similarity between the clusters on 12 key variables, which fact reflects the adequacy of this sample. Final selection of the specific respondent within each sampled dwelling unit was made according to a procedure of random selection developed by the Sampling Section of the Institute for Social Research of the University of Michigan.[4]

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[4] For a detailed explanation of this method, see Kish, Leslie, "A Procedure for Objective Respondent Selection Within the Household", Journal of the American Statistical Association, Vol. 44.

The general population sample was supplemented by a sub-sample of all new construction which took place in the area since the date of the city directory. A complete listing of all new construction was obtained from the city planning commission and the same sampling interval was applied.

Each one of the three above described samples represented a group of potential decision makers - although at different levels - in the financing of the local schools. These are called "potential" and not "actual" decision makers since only those who cast their votes in the school elections will have a direct impact on this issue. Hence, three different groups are to be considered:

a. those who register and actually vote in school elections
b. those who register but do not vote, and
c. those who are not registered to vote.

The Questionnaire

Three questionnaires were utilized in this study. The first was a short form schedule consisting of 8 pages which was administered to the voter registration sample. In addition to the usual census questions, it contained sets of questions related to residential experience, formal group membership, taxation, and voting. Open-end, Likert, and poll type questions were all employed. A similar questionnaire was administered to the sample of new registrants.

The third questionnaire consisted of 21 pages and was administered to the sample of the entire school district. The types of questions employed were the same as for the short form schedule, but the range of questions was broadened. In addition to census data, this schedule included questions pertaining to curriculum, special school services, taxation and voting, school personnel, and buildings and facilities.

Field Work

Field work was conducted during the month of September, 1962. A staff of twelve professionally trained interviewers was employed, all of whom were mature women. All interviewers received instruction on the nature of the study in preliminary sessions. The importance of the sample design and the theoretical significance of the study were discussed. The interviewers demonstrated strong positive attitudes toward the study before they actually started their work, and all were pleased with the reception they received in the community.

Indexes of School Support

Earlier discussion has stressed the view that the level of the ongoing community-school relationship is reflected in the willingness of the community to provide support for the schools. Thus the acts of registering to vote, voting, and voting affirmitively toward millage issues are behaviors which might be treated as reflecting degree of supportiveness for the public schools. Three indexes were employed to measure this "supportiveness" factor.

a. Index of actual voting behavior: derived from the voter registration sample. It indicates which people actually voted in the March and June 1960 elections. Three categories are herein recognized: those who voted in March and June; those who voted either in March or June; and those who voted in neither election.

b. Index of stated voting behavior: derived from the sample of the whole population. This is a simple reporting of past elections in which the respondent says he voted. Three categories of voters are herein recognized: those who voted in national or state elections only; those who voted in the school elections (one of the last two); and those who voted in no elections over the past two years.

c. Index of millage support: derived from answers given to the two millage questions. Those who stated they would support a tax increase for either building needs or for operating costs are labelled "definitely supportive". Those who said they would vote "no" on both of these proposals are labelled "definitely rejective". All others; those in doubt, or those voting yes on one proposal and no on the other are labelled "ambivalent".

Significance of Data

In interpreting data obtained from a sample survey, one invariably faces the question of the significance of his figures. For instance, how large should a significant difference between two percentages be? Or, what is the true value of any given percent? Unless the findings uncovered in the sample survey are reasonably close to the facts in the population, very little factual information can be gained. This section will explain the general usefulness of the research data that are presented in this report primarily in terms of their representation of the Birmingham community.

It should be emphasized that a sample survey such as the present one yields useful but not exact estimates of the values which it seeks to measure in the population. In other words, statistical values obtained from a sample survey are not the same as those of the total universe under consideration. In making sample surveys, two types of error are usually involved: (a) Human error which occurs in various stages of the research operation such as errors in reporting or coding, and (b) sampling error which reflects the random variations which occur as a result of interviewing only a fraction of the total population. A third source of error involves non-response. The problem of non-response stems from the fact that, for various reasons, it is nearly impossible to interview every person who is selected in the sample.

Whereas the application of care and caution could serve the important function of reducing or limiting human error, sampling error is inherent in the fact that sample statistics are usually larger or smaller than the values which would have been obtained had the whole population been interviewed. Furthermore, the exact difference between sample values and population values is an unknown quantity. All that can be verified is a range on either side of the sample value within which the population value can be expected to lie with a given probability of success. Hence, sampling error is a measure of the expected variation of a sample statistic from the corresponding value in the population.

The data contained in this report show the frequency of respondents who gave specific answers to the various items in the questionnaire, including relevant cross tabulations. All figures are given in terms of percentages. In order to establish the significance of these distributions, various "confidence intervals" are computed using different sizes of sampled groups. A confidence interval indicates the range within which the population value can be expected to lie with a given probability. In this instance, a 95 per cent level of confidence is used. This means that with 95 in 100 the "true" population value is within the range indicated. This also means that in a probability of 5 in 100 the population value will be outside this range. Tables A-1 and A-2 in the Appendix are offered as aids to the interpretation of the significance of the reported findings. However, on the basis of our computations, any difference of at least 10 percentage points between two or more independent groups in the sample is a "true" difference in the population. This is a very conservative estimate which is offered for the reader who wishes a quick evaluation of the tables.

CHAPTER 2

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS AND SCHOOL SUPPORT

The concept of social organization as an explanatory principle in the analysis of school support is both basic and simple. This is merely to recognize that the people of a community play many roles, and when viewed collectively these roles constitute an organized whole. Moreover, as people in the community go about the daily business of performing their specialized roles, various kinds of needs arise in association with these different roles. Mothers of young children will tend to experience certain kinds of needs as they perform their functions, needs quite different from those experienced by women who have reared their families and are adjusting to a retirement routine and a social security budget. The social organizational patterns of the community are therefore basic to a comprehension of school support because this approach places people in a collective context which permits an objective recognition of the source of differential needs and varying values toward education.

The analysis of school support in relation to community organization may be approached in two ways. On the one hand, we may analyze the structure of the population . . . see what kinds of people comprise the community and how the various population characteristics relate to school support. Such analysis is based on the observation that factors such as occupation, education, family life cycle stage, and so forth reflect something of the kinds of roles which people play in the community, and thereby mirror varying needs and values associated with these roles. This, in brief, is the substance of the analysis in this chapter and in chapter 4. The assumption is made that the perceived need for good schools is not uniform in the population . . . some kinds of people will be more interested in and supportive of education than will others.

In addition to the kind of an analysis which determines the distribution of school support in the community by population characteristics, one may also analyze the existence of support as it occurs in the dynamic setting of the community's interaction and communication patterns. Although most Americans like to believe that they think, feel, and act purely as individuals, uninfluenced by the opinions of others around them, the facts lie in quite the opposite direction. All sane people are influenced, and to a profound degree, by the groups to which they belong. Therefore, in addition to recognizing that response to the schools is patterned by the kinds of roles which people play and by specific needs generated by these roles, responses are further patterned by specific social groups to which people belong. Chapter 5 deals with this latter topic and explores some of the ways in which group activity influences level of support for the schools.

The analysis in this chapter is derived primarily from data gathered in the 1961 survey. The first part of the chapter is devoted to a presentation of population characteristics which are related to level of support. The manner in which such factors as length of residence in the community, child involvement, home ownership, education, and occupation are related to support for the schools is examined. The second part of the chapter is concerned with the problem of what kinds of people register and vote. Is there a difference in the level of support for the schools between the general population and the registered voters? Since the kinds of people who register and vote in school elections differ from the general population, does this mean that school millage opponents tend to register and vote more frequently than school supporters? Since both of these analyses utilize level of support as a dependent variable, the distinctions which are made between manifest and latent support will now be reviewed.

Level of Support: Two Forms[1]

Chapter 1 stressed the viewpoint that the degree to which a community is supportive of its schools may be conceived as existing at a specific level, at a given point in time, and as ranging between the polar extremes of very high to very low. Moreover, this level of support is to be viewed as a resultant of all positive and all negative forces in the community which impinge upon the schools, or upon the particular issue being examined. Level of support is thus a resultant phenomenon, it is ongoing in time, and is a dynamic rather than a static entity.

In a more specific sense, level of support may be conceived to exist in two major forms. On the one hand, support may be viewed as a precondition on the part of a population to respond in a given manner to specific school issues or situations. This latent support represents a summation of the community's attitudes to a given issue or situation.

On the other hand, level of support may be seen to exist in the form of observable acts. Participating in groups which take action toward school issues or problems, or voting in millage elections would represent manifest behavior. Thus a millage vote is an ideal index of manifest support since it is an overt response of a population to a specific issue. Moreover, this particular response is easily described mathematically at a percentage level, ranging somewhere between the polar extremes of 0 to 100 per cent.

Indices of Support

Two indices of support are employed in the following analysis. Latent support is measured by an Index of Millage Support which is based on the sample of the entire school district population. This index is derived from answers which respondents gave to two millage questions. The first question asked if the respondent would support a future tax increase to meet building

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1. See p. 6 for a more complete discussion of latent and manifest support.

needs, if that question were placed on the ballot. The second question asked if the respondent would support a future tax increase to meet operating needs, if that issue were placed on the ballot. Those who replied "yes" to both of these questions are labelled "supportive". Those who said "no" to both of these questions are labelled "rejective". All others, those in doubt or those who favored one issue but not the other, are labelled "ambivalent".

Manifest support is operationalized in an Index of Voting Activity. This index is derived from the voter registration sample and is based on whether the respondent voted or did not vote in the March and June, 1961 elections. Three categories of activity are thus derived: 1) those who voted in March and June; 2) those who voted in March or June; and 3) those who voted in neither election.

These indices are designed to help probe some of the relationships which the conceptual focus has accentuated. For instance, one phenomenon of considerable interest concerns the fact that prior to an election a given degree of latent support for the issue at stake exists in the form of attitudes extant in the whole community. Some of these attitudes will come to be triggered into acts and will be registered on ballots. Others will not. The question therefore arises as to which factors are associated with the triggering of attitudes into acts . . . in what ways does the voting minority differ from the non-voting majority? Such analysis requires information about two distinct groups: the general population in which attitudes arise, and the voting population in which they are expressed.

The Two Samples

In order to pursue an analysis of these two populations, this study has utilized two samples.[2] One was drawn from a list of registered voters in the Birmingham School District. It is this list which provides us with some information about manifest support, since these people have acted toward the schools by registering to vote, and a portion of this group have actually voted in the various elections. At the time this sample was drawn, notation was made as to whether the person drawn had voted in each of the past two elections. People who had voted in one or both of the past two elections are henceforth referred to as "active", those who voted in neither of these elections are labelled "inactive".

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[2] See pp. 17-19 for a description of the samples.

The other sample represents the entire adult population residing in the Birmingham School District. It is this sample which provides information concerning latent support.

In summary, the ensuing analysis makes a distinction between attitudes toward millage issues and actual voting activity. Both phenomena are assumed to be related to such social organizational properties of the community as length of residence, age of youngest child, home ownership status, sex, education, and occupation.

I. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS, ATTITUDINAL SUPPORT, AND VOTING ACTIVITY

In the next few pages, both latent and manifest support for the schools is related to the following social characteristics: length of residence in the community, age of youngest child, home ownership status, sex, education, and occupation. This section seeks answers to these questions:

1) Are millage attitudes related to the above mentioned social characteristics?
2) Is voting activity related to these same characteristics?
3) Which social characteristics predict: a) supportive attitudes and voting activity; b) supportive attitudes and voting inactivity; c) non-supportive attitudes and voting activity; d) non-supportive attitudes and voting inactivity?

It is hypothesized that attitudes toward millage issues (latent support) and voting activity (manifest support) are both related to the social characteristics of the community. The Index of Millage Support, applied to the general population, provides information about degree of latent support, while the Index of Voting Activity, applied to the voter registration population, provides an index of tendency toward manifest activity.

A. Length of Residence in the Community

In view of the fact that a large proportion of newcomers to the Birmingham School District are young married couples with children, it is hypothesized that the latent level of support will be high for recent migrants to the area, but will diminish with length of residence. On the other hand, since the activity of voting in local elections is a behavior closely associated with membership in local groups, and since newcomers to a community do not reach the apex of group membership for a few years, it is hypothesized that voting activity will increase with length of residence in the community.

Figure 2-1 shows the hypothesis to be borne out; supportiveness for millage issues declines with length of residence, while voting activity increases. A very high latent support on the part of newcomers is matched by a very low degree of manifest support. However, the first two years of residence in the community is associated with a dramatic decrease in latent support (from 66 per cent to 49 per cent), and a sharp increase in stated[3] manifest support (from 13 per cent to 26 per cent).

The reasons for length of residence to be positively associated with voting activity, but negatively associated with supportive attitudes, need explanation. One possible assumption is that the newcomers to the community--an

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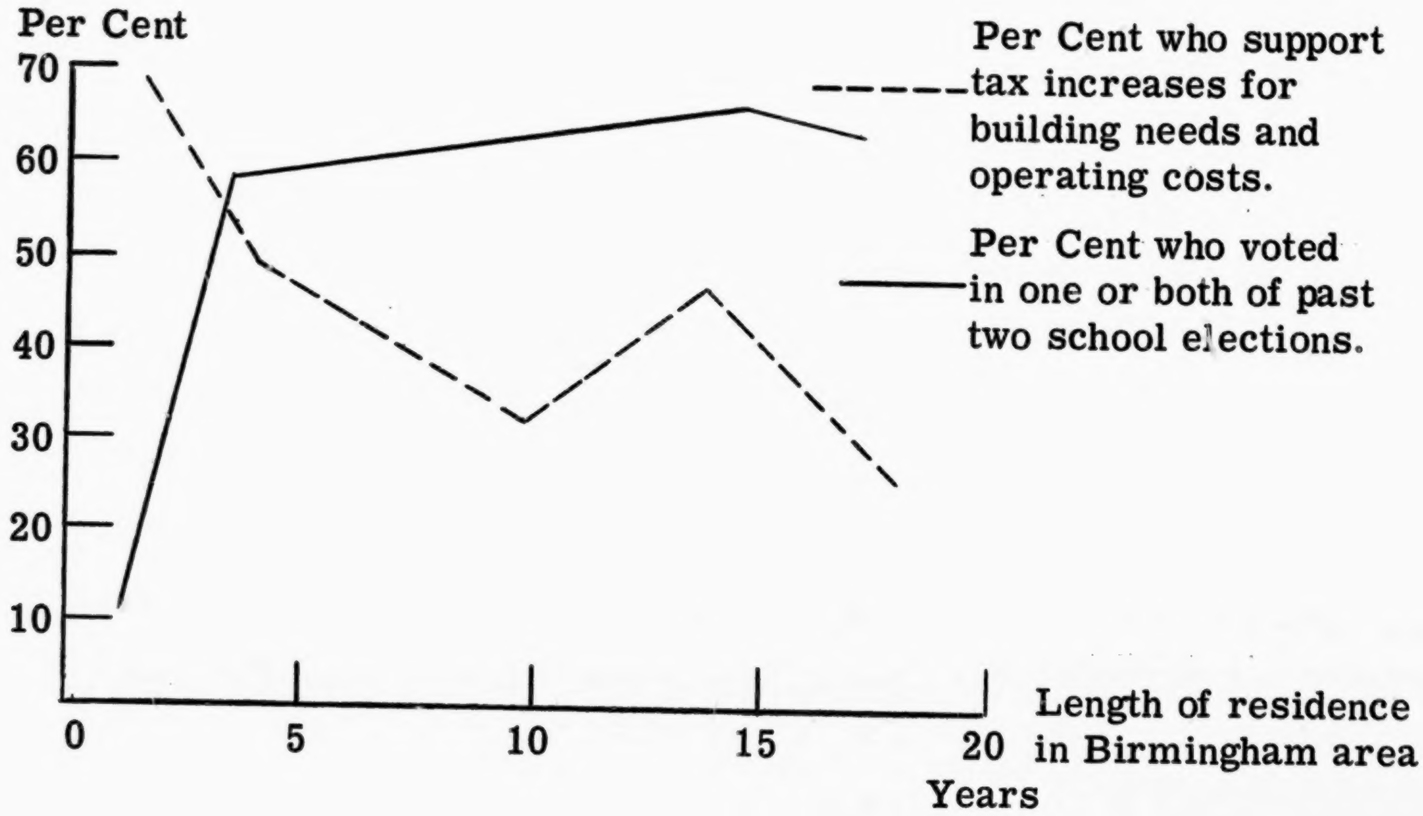
[3] In this figure the sample of registered voters did not provide sufficient data to permit a comparison with the general population. Hence this table utilizes the general population sample and compares those respondents who said they voted with those who said they did not vote. Other figures which follow, however, are based on comparisons of the two populations, and the Index of Voting Activity is based on voting records which indicate in which elections the respondent actually did or did not vote.

FIGURE 2-1

STATED VOTING ACTIVITY, AND SUPPORTIVENESS FOR MILLAGE PROPOSALS, BY LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE COMMUNITY[4]



aggregate composed largely of younger married couples with young children--may harbor strong positive attitudes toward the schools, but are not yet sufficiently integrated into the ongoing group processes of the community which spur them to register and to vote. These same group processes which carry people to the polls, however, may also serve to instill local group norms and thereby "level" the previous high degree of attitudinal support for school millage issues. Another explanation could be inherent in a long-term selective migration resulting in the attraction of certain types of people to the Birmingham area who have different characteristics from those of the older residents.

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4. For statistical treatment of this and other figures, see Appendix A-1 which contains computations of sampling error, and Appendix A-2 for computations of sizes of significant differences.

B. Age of Youngest Child

The factor of child involvement in the public schools is herein hypothesized as increasing the extent of favorable attitudes toward millage issues, and as increasing voting activity. Thus, people in the general population who have children of school age (i.e. 6 to 18 years of age) should be more supportive in their attitudes toward millage issues than people with preschool age children (i.e. under 6 years). Both of these groups should be more supportive than those who have no school age children.

FIGURE 2-2

INDEX OF MILLAGE SUPPORT, BY AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD

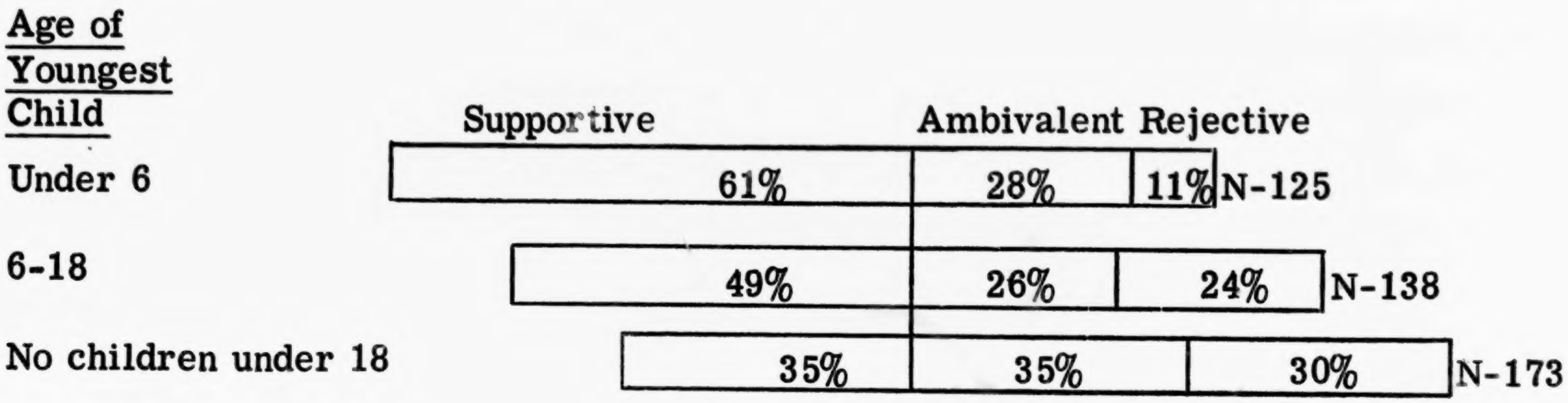
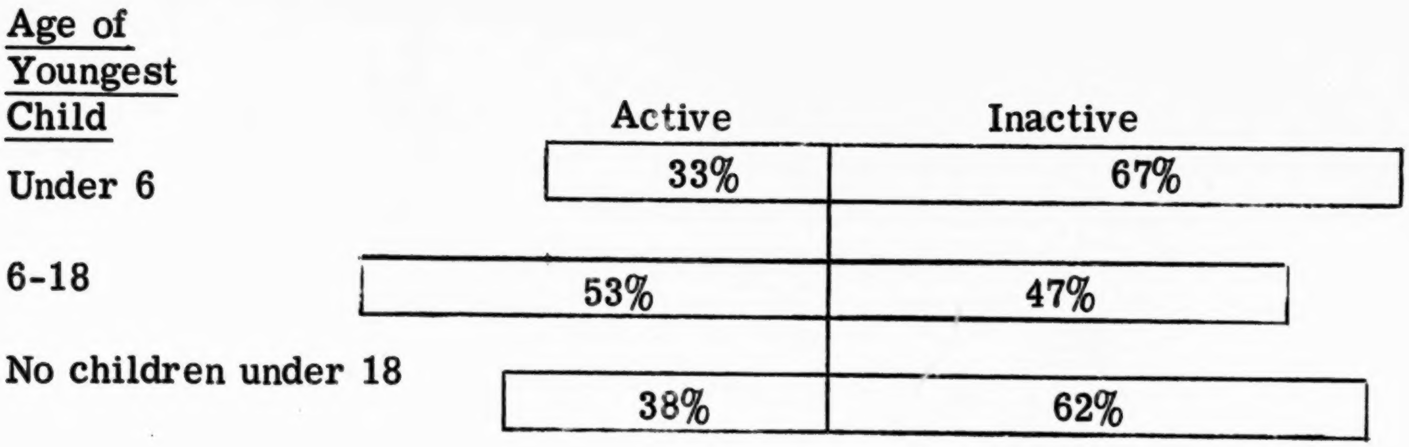


FIGURE 2-3

VOTING ACTIVITY, BY AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD



Moreover, people who are registered to vote and also have school age children should vote more frequently than those persons with pre-school age children--and both of these groups should be more active at the polls than people with no children of school age.

Figures 2-2 and 2-3 reveal that the factor of age of youngest child is related to attitudes toward millage, and to voting activity.

The previously stated hypothesis is only partially upheld; there are two noteworthy exceptions; 1) people with preschool age children are more supportive attitudinally than are people with school age children, but 2) the people with pre-schoolers are the least active of the three groups at the polls. The most rejective of these three categories are people with no children under 18 years of age. However, this group is less active at the polls than are people who have children in the school-age range. It is the people with children 6 to 18 years of age who provide an above average degree of latent support, and an above average extent of voting activity. In brief, the factor of child-involvement in the schools is positively related to both latent and manifest support.

C. Home Ownership Status

In view of the fact that people who own their homes tend to belong to older age categories and have fewer school-age children than do those who are buying or renting, it is hypothesized that home owners will be less supportive attitudinally toward millage issues than will the other two groups. However, home owners as a group have lived in the community a longer time than the other two groups, hence it is anticipated that home owners will be the most active of these three groups at the polls, and renters will be the least active.

As expected, Figures 2-4 and 2-5 on the following page bear out the hypothesis. The factor of home ownership status is associated with attitudes toward millage issues, and with voting activity.

FIGURE 2-4

INDEX OF MILLAGE SUPPORT, BY HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS

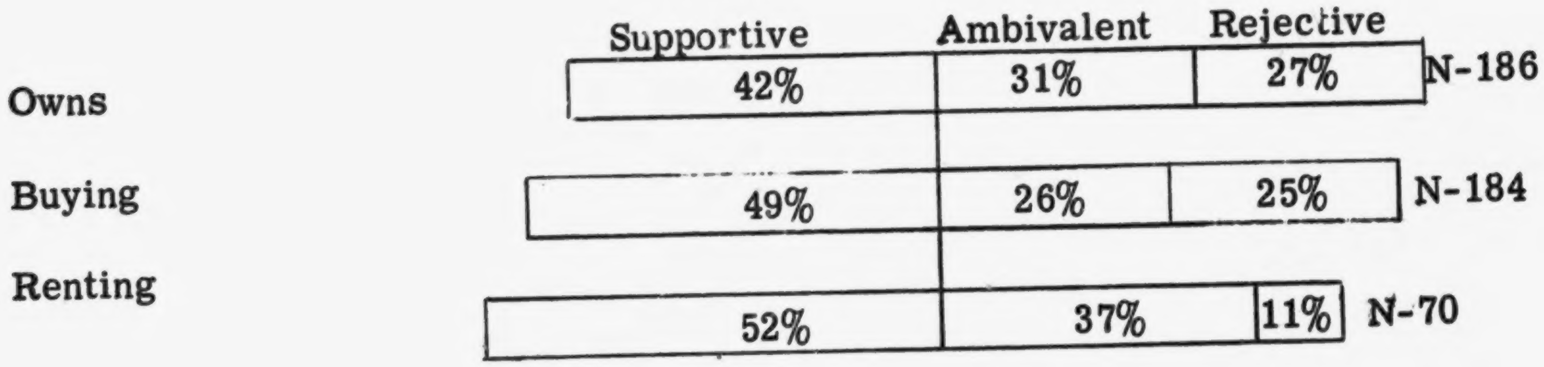


FIGURE 2-5

STATED VOTING ACTIVITY, BY HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS

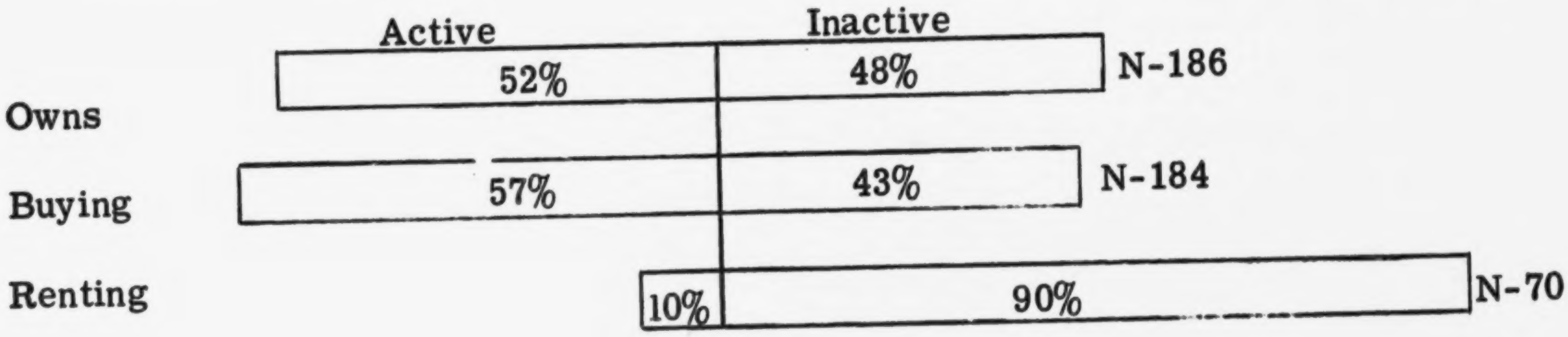


Figure 2-4 reveals that people in the general population who own their homes are the least supportive of millage issues of the three groups, while those who are renting show the greatest attitudinal support.

Figure 2-5 divulges that by far the least active of the registered voters are those who are renting--only 10 per cent of this group voted in one or more of the past two elections, while the most active of the three groups is the home purchasing category. Thus with home ownership, as with the factor of length of residence in the community, the most attitudinally supportive group is the least active one at the polls.

D. Sex of Respondent

As a group women are usually in closer contact with the schools than are the men, and they are also more likely to be affiliated with the P.T.A. and other youth-serving groups such as Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Moreover, in a community such as Birmingham where a high proportion of the men commute to work in central city (Detroit), it seems reasonable to assume that women would have a greater opportunity to get to the polls and cast their vote. Thus it appears logical to expect that women in Birmingham will be more supportive of millage issues than will men, and women will be more active at the polls than will men.

FIGURE 2-6

INDEX OF MILLAGE SUPPORT, BY SEX

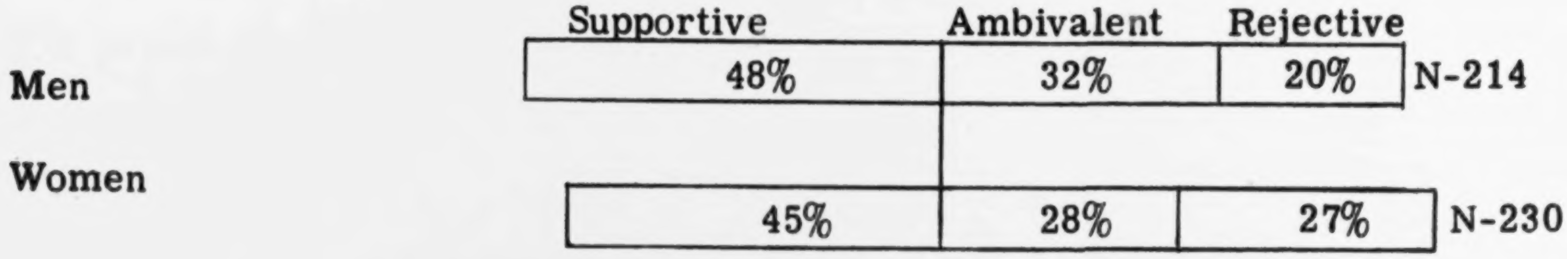
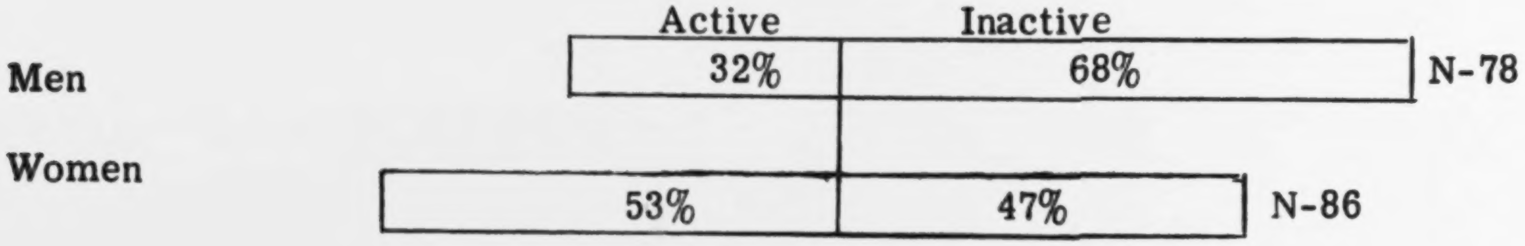


FIGURE 2-7

VOTING ACTIVITY, BY SEX



Figures 2-6 and 2-7 above demonstrate that women are not more supportive attitudinally than men, but they are more active at the polls. While there is no significant relationship between the factor of sex and attitudes toward millage issues, there is a relationship between sex and voting activity. This greater voting frequency on the part of women is in reverse of national trends in state and federal elections where men vote more frequently than women.

E. Educational Level

In keeping with past findings, it is hypothesized that people who have attended college will be more supportive attitudinally, and will be more likely to vote in millage elections than will those of less educational experience.

FIGURE 2-8

INDEX OF MILLAGE SUPPORT, BY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

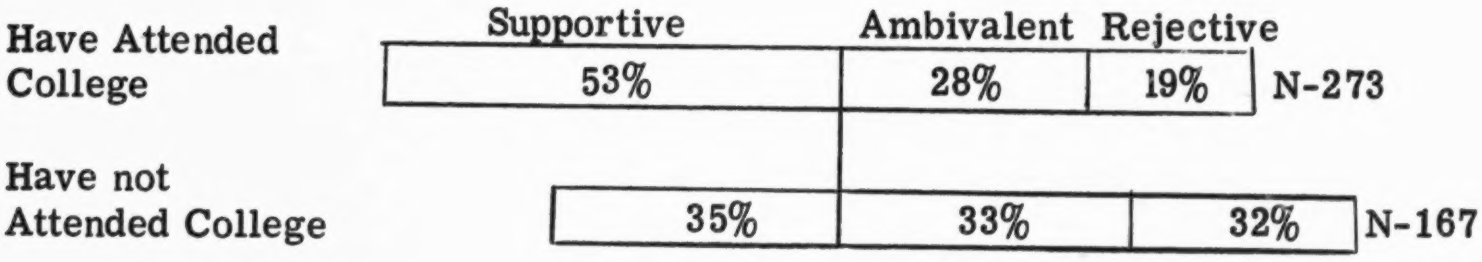
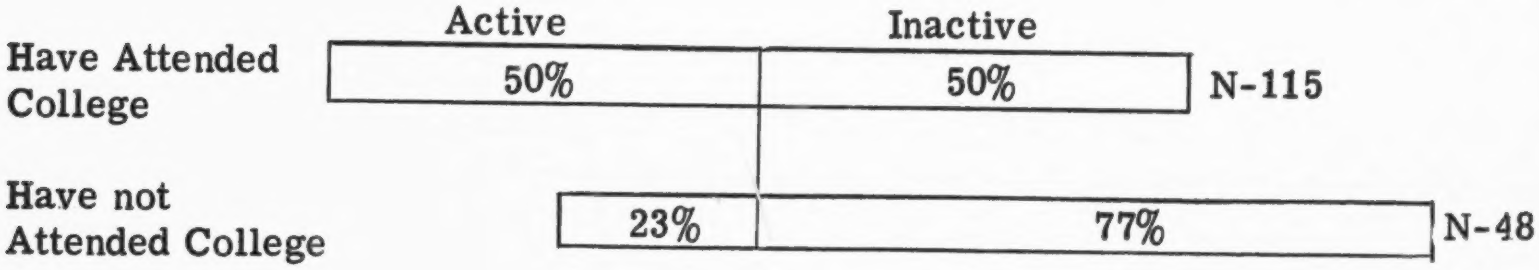


FIGURE 2-9

VOTING ACTIVITY, BY EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE



The above figures, 2-8 and 2-9, indicate that the factor of educational experience is related to attitudes toward millage, and to voting activity.

People in the community who have attended college are much more supportive of millage proposals than are those who have not attended college. Among the registered voters, those who have attended college are much more likely to vote in elections than are those with no college experience.

F. Occupation

An analysis of the influence of occupation upon level of support in the Birmingham Area poses some difficulties owing to the selective nature of this population, one which is top-heavy with professional, technical, and kindred occupations, and equally heavy with managers, officials, and proprietors. These categories, plus non-gainfully employed housewives constitute 4/5 of the community's population. The remaining occupational categories which comprise the majority of pursuits in most other communities constitute only about 1/5 of the population of Birmingham. The ensuing analysis of occupations has therefore collapsed occupational categories such as clerical, sales, craftsmen, foremen, operatives, private household and service workers, and other kindred jobs into the solitary category of "other occupations".

Because the professional, technical, and kindred workers have a higher educational attainment than the other groups, and because they can better see the need for specialized knowledge in their everyday work, it is hypothesized that this group will be the most supportive attitudinally of the four categories.

The housewife group, with ready accessibility to the polls and sufficient immersion in the affairs of the community to impel voting, is hypothesized as being the most active in voting. Contrariwise, the professional, technical, and kindred workers category is hypothesized as being the least active in voting activity.

Figures 2-10 and 2-11 show that the factor of occupation is related to attitudes toward millage, and to voting activity. Moreover, these figures confirm the stated hypothesis.

FIGURE 2-10

INDEX OF MILLAGE SUPPORT, BY OCCUPATION

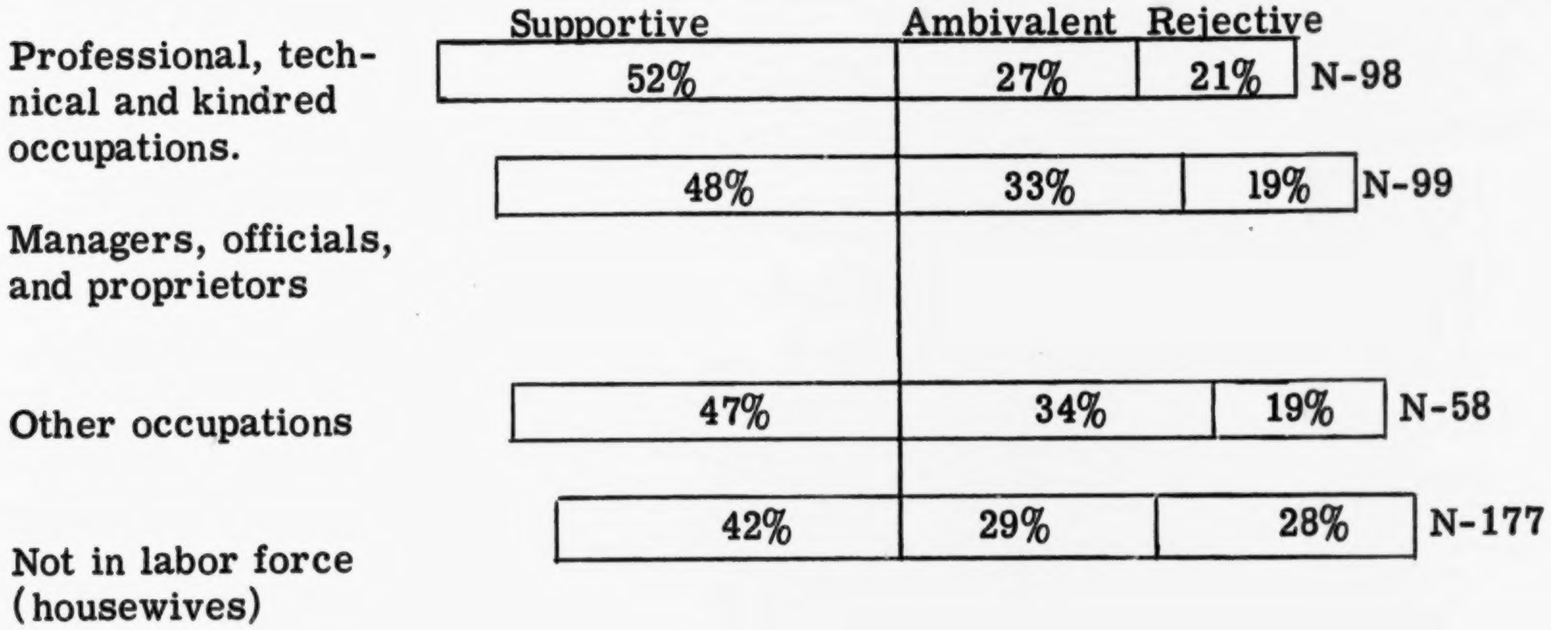


FIGURE 2-11

VOTING ACTIVITY: BY OCCUPATION

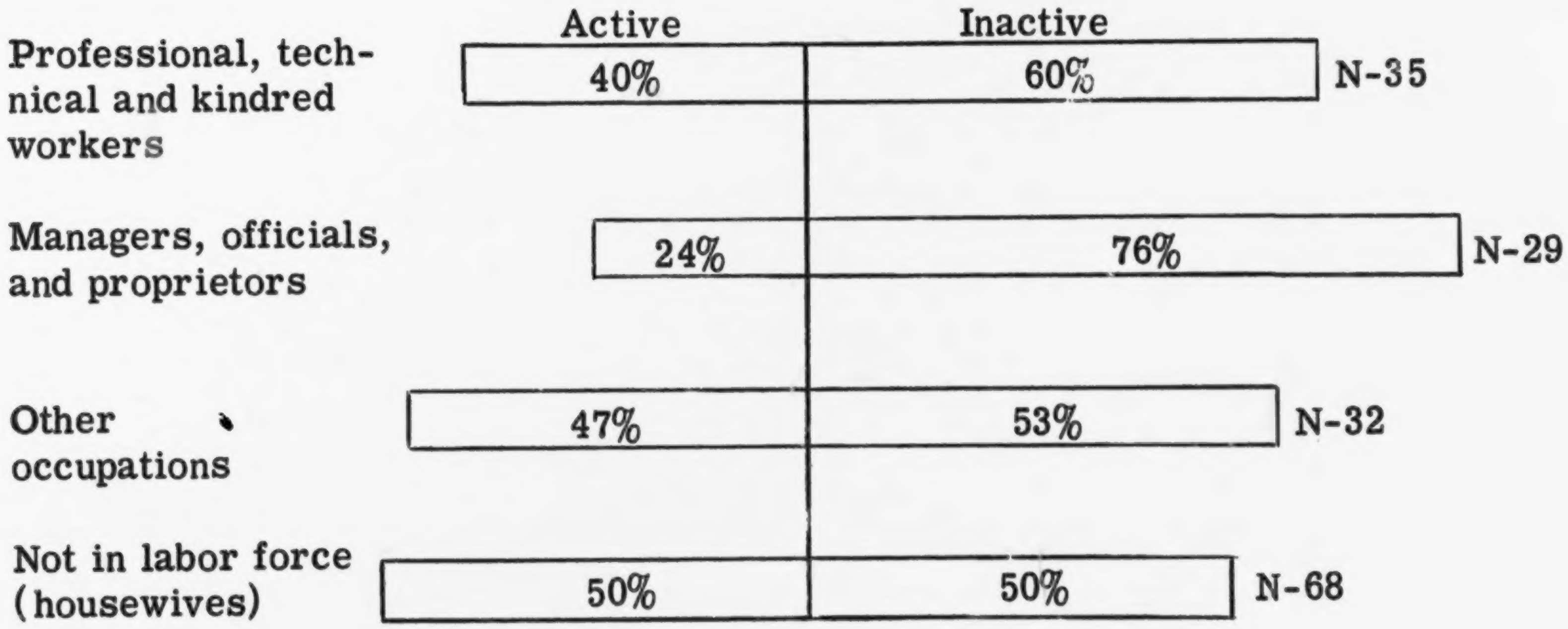


Figure 2-10 shows the professional, technical and kindred workers category to be the most supportive of the four occupational groups in the general population, while those not in the labor force (predominantly housewives) are the least supportive attitudinally.

Among the registered voters, Figure 2-11 shows the housewife group to be the most active at the polls, while the professional and technical workers are the least likely of the four groups to vote.

Attitudes in Relation to Voting Activity

It is one thing to harbor an attitude toward a school issue, but it is another thing to express that attitude at the polls on election day. It is therefore pertinent to ask, "What kinds of people express what kinds of attitudes at the polls?" Figures 2-12 and 2-13 provide a summary answer to this question. Figure 2-12 shows the degree of attitudinal support, together with the extent of voting activity for the various social characteristics. Figure 2-13 is a corollary presentation and shows the degree of attitudinal rejection together with voting activity. By combining the information in these two tables, four categories of attitudes and voting activity may be identified. The social characteristics most closely associated with these categories is as follows:

1. Relatively supportive attitudes, and relatively active at the polls:
   a) people who have attended college
   b) people with children enrolled in the public schools (Later analysis will add P. T. A. members and people who are active in formal associations)

2. Relatively supportive attitudes, and relatively inactive at the polls:
   a) new residents in the community
   b) people with preschool age children
   c) people who are renting

3. Relatively non-supportive attitudes, and relatively active at the polls:
   a) old residents (e. g. people who have lived in the community over 15 years)
   b) housewives

FIGURE 2-12

SUMMARY OF ATTITUDINAL SUPPORT AND VOTING ACTIVITY BY SOCIAL CATEGORIES

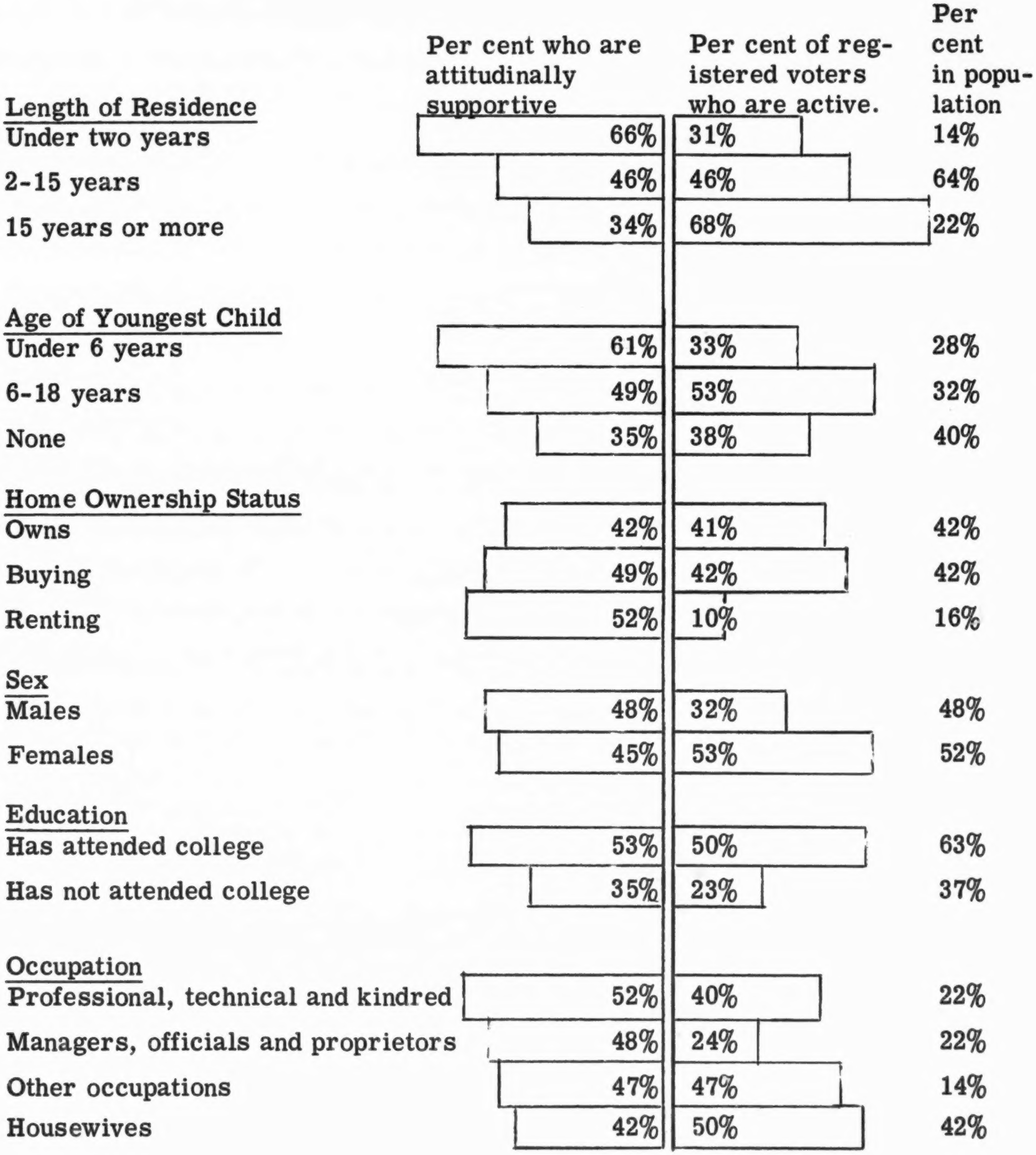
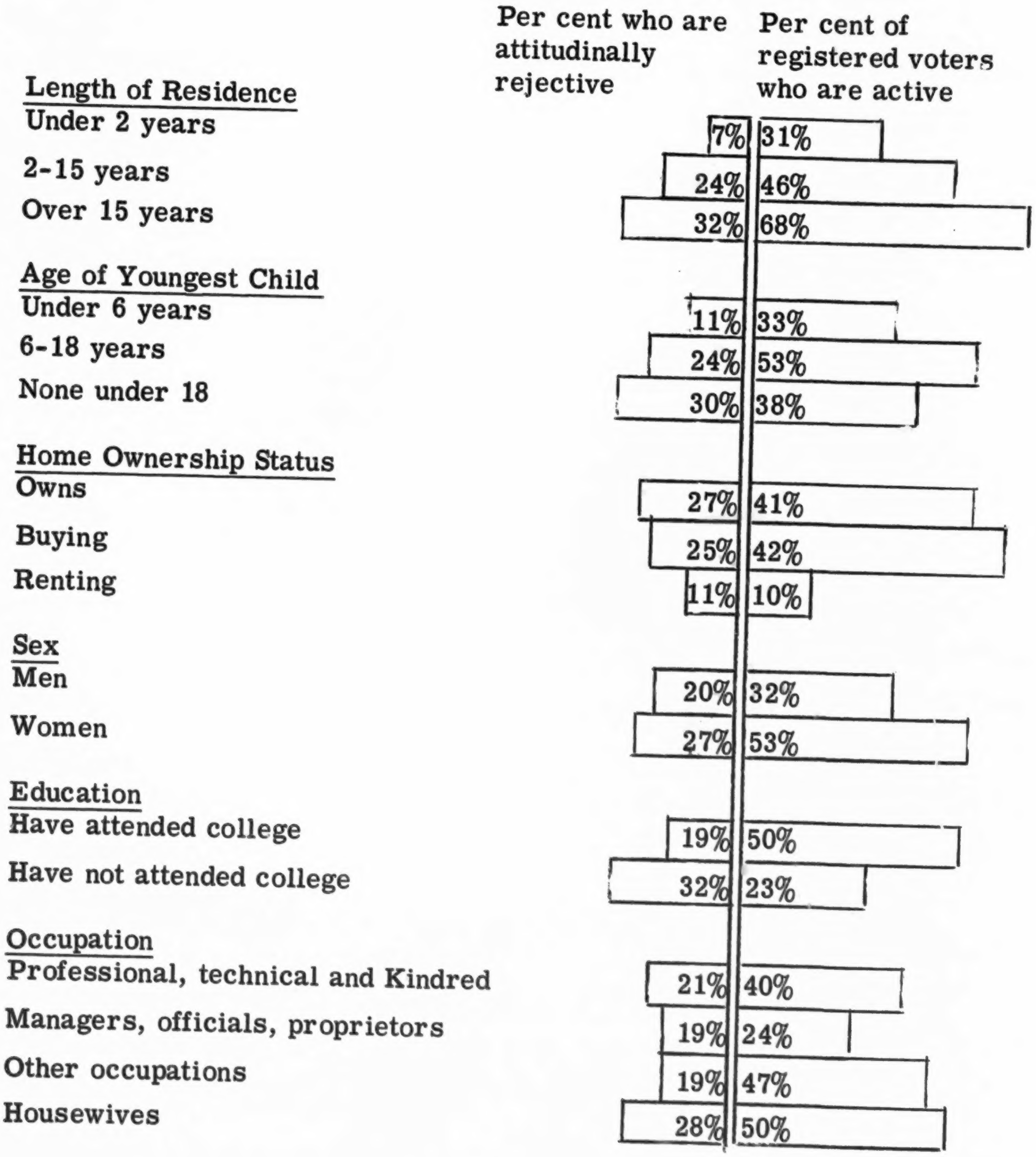


FIGURE 2-13

SUMMARY OF ATTITUDINAL REJECTION AND VOTING ACTIVITY, BY SOCIAL CATEGORIES



4. Relatively non-supportive attitudes, but relatively inactive at the polls:
    a) people who have not attended college
    b) people with no children under 18 years of age.

In the above analysis, it may be observed that the kinds of people who actually "carry" an election in this community are those listed in category "1". Those who could help carry an election, but don't, are those in category "2". Those who depress the manifest level of support are those in category "3", while those who could depress it, but don't, are those in category "4".

The entire preceding analysis has upheld a basic proposition: both latent and manifest levels of support for the schools are related to the population characteristics of the community. Length of residence, age of youngest child, home ownership status, educational level, and occupation are all associated with people's attitudes toward millage proposals and to their tendency to vote in school elections.

Moreover, it is quite clear that there is no simple relationship between holding attitudes and acting on them. Certain kinds of people who are attitudinally supportive do not tend to vote, just as other kinds of people are rejective in their attitudes and don't vote, while still others are attitudinally supportive and do vote. This, of course, suggests a condition whereby a community which possesses considerable untapped school support could lose a millage election; or how a community could harbor considerable inactive opposition and carry an election. Thus the problem of what factors impel people to vote in school elections is critical. The analysis provided in Chapter 5 helps throw some light on this issue.

II. THE VOTING POTENTIAL: SUPPORT IN THE GENERAL POPULATION, AND AMONG THE REGISTERED VOTERS

Since the previous analysis has shown that various population characteristics bear a significant relationship to voting activity, it now remains to be determined what over all effect selective registration has upon the kind of support which schools experience during millage elections. We might also ask if the registered voters who actually vote differ in their supportiveness from those registered voters who do not vote.

Another factor to be explored concerns the nature of the responses which are accorded to different kinds of millage proposals. In Chapter 1 it was indicated that level of support should be analyzed with respect to specific school issues. This is to anticipate that response to a proposal for a millage increase for new buildings could differ from the response to a proposal for a millage increase to meet increased operational costs. This proposition was tested in the 1961 survey.

Differential Response to two Kinds of Millage Request

Two questions concerning hypothetical millage requests were asked of respondents in both the general population sample and in the sample of registered voters. The first question tested reactions to a proposal to raise local taxes in order to meet building needs. The results of this question appear in Figure 2-14 below.

FIGURE 2-14

LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR BUILDING NEEDS, BY GENERAL POPULATION, AND BY REGISTERED VOTERS

"Suppose you were asked to vote tomorrow to approve or to disapprove of raising taxes locally in order to meet building needs of the public schools. Would you probably vote:"

	Yes	No	Undecided
General population*	45%	40%	15%
Registered voters*	40%	40%	20%

---

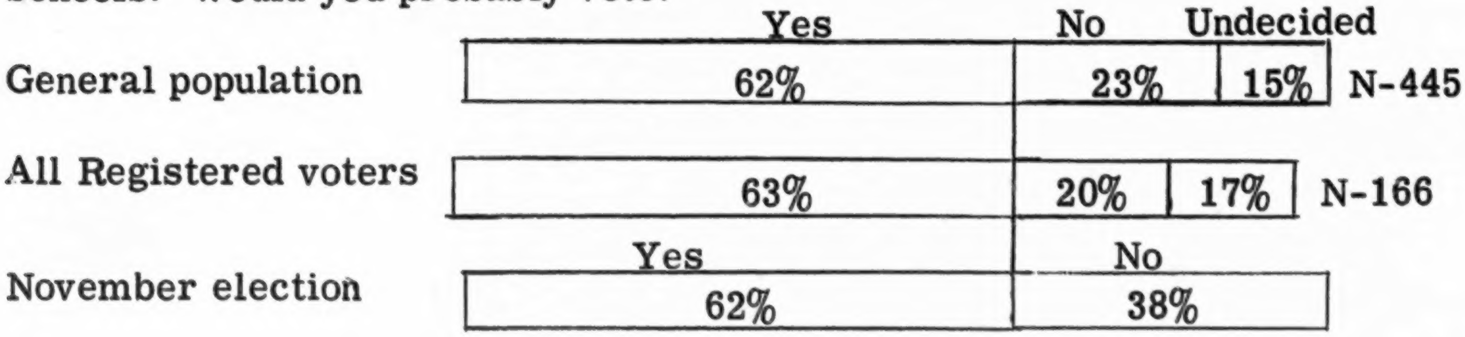
*All General Population Tables in this chapter are based on 445 cases; all registered voters tables are based on 166 cases.

The second question tested reaction to a proposal to raise local taxes in order to meet operating costs of the public schools. In view of the fact that this was the kind of millage request which actually appeared on the ballot six months later, the final election results are included in Figure 2-15 along with the predictions derived from the general population and from all registered voters.

FIGURE 2-15

MANIFEST AND LATENT SUPPORT FOR AN OPERATIONAL MILLAGE PROPOSAL

"Suppose you were asked to vote tomorrow to approve or to disapprove of raising local taxes in order to meet operating costs of the public schools. Would you probably vote:"



The differences in reaction to these two kinds of millage requests are considerable. In the general population, 17 per cent more favored the operational request than those who favored the building request. Among the registered voters, 23 per cent more favored the operational than favored the building proposal. Moreover, public discrimination with respect to these two millage proposals was borne out in other questions in which dissatisfaction was expressed with the past building program, while the desire for a quality instructional program was simultaneously voiced. The specific character of level of support is therefore borne out in these two figures. Moreover, the importance of making discriminations between issues is emphasized when it is observed that the millage request for new buildings would probably have encountered difficulty, while an operational request carried, as predicted, with a comfortable 62 per cent margin.

The Effects of Selective Factors in Registration and Voting

Preceding data have shown that people who register and vote in school elections have different social characteristics from those who don't. For instance, active registered voters tend to be over-represented by people who have resided in the community for five years or more, who have children of school age, who own or are buying their homes, by women, and by people who have attended college. This raises a question concerning the end result of such selective registration and voting activities upon the level of school support. Are registered voters more supportive of millage issues than the general population? Are active registrants more supportive than inactive ones? A comparison of support levels rendered by these three categories throws some light on this problem.

Figure 2-16 reveals that the major difference in millage support between registered voters and the general population lies in the fact that the registered voters are less ambivalent. However, Figure 2-17 indicates that active registered voters are not only less ambivalent than are inactive registrants, they are more supportive as well.

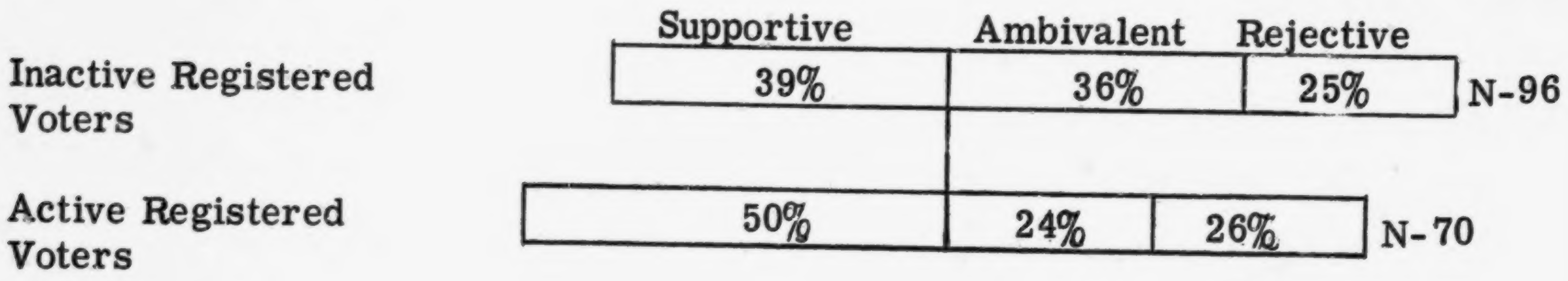
FIGURE 2-16

INDEX OF MILLAGE SUPPORT, BY GENERAL POPULATION AND BY REGISTERED VOTERS

	Supportive	Ambivalent	Rejective	
General population	39%	43%	18%	N-445
All Registered Voters	44%	31%	25%	N-166

FIGURE 2-17

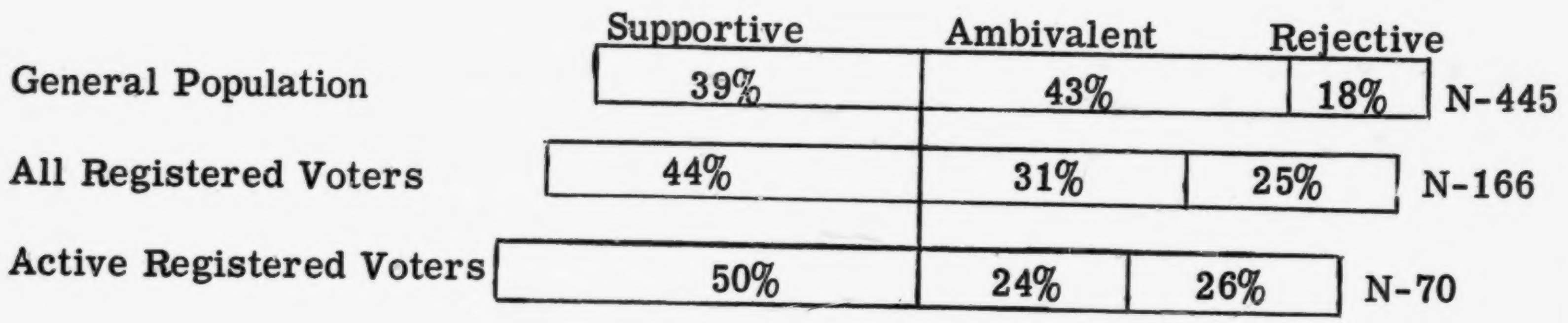
INDEX OF MILLAGE SUPPORT, BY ACTIVE AND INACTIVE REGISTERED VOTERS



To summarize this situation, Figure 2-18 shows that as one proceeds from the general population to all registered voters, and then to active registered voters, ambivalence is reduced and support is increased. The closer people in Birmingham come to the polls, the more supportive they become. However, a possible dimunition of support lies close at hand in the inactive registered voters.

FIGURE 2-18

INDEX OF MILLAGE SUPPORT: BY GENERAL POPULATION, BY ALL REGISTERED VOTERS, AND BY ACTIVE REGISTERED VOTERS



CHAPTER 3

THE USE OF SURVEY RESEARCH DATA

by Walter Piel
Administrative Assistant, Birmingham Public Schools

To the administrator in business, industry, government, and the armed forces, utilization of survey research data is nothing new. Paradoxically, this technique which was developed largely in educational centers, has not yet been applied to the myriads of educational problems for which it is logically suited. Therefore, the educational administrator--more than his counterpart in other institutions--functions in a sea of uncertainty. A combination of challenges meets him at every turn, among them increasing numbers and mobility of the population; rising citizen interest in schools; the need for improved quality and quantity of staff, facilities, and equipment, professional growth needs of the present staff; shrinking bases of financial support--and more. Moreover, his performance and the intangible end-product for which he is responsible are subject to continual community appraisal and judgment. Worse yet, he is subject to unrepresentative and biased reflections from the community. It is upon such reflection that he is often obliged to make judgments, rather than proceding from a base of factual, accurate knowledge about the total community he serves. Nevertheless, decisions must be made.

A brief account follows of how a school system obtained and utilized accurate data about the social organization, attitudes, and behavior of the community it serves. More specifically, this is a description of how an administration became increasingly aware of the relationship between social organization and the level of community support for the schools. It is hoped this information may prove of practical value to others with an interest in, or responsibility for, school-community communication and educational decision-making.

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Background of the Study

The Birmingham Board of Education approved a community survey in October, 1960. Prior to that time, the school district had experienced an operating millage defeat in March (the first in its history). A levy, reduced by more than 50 per cent, had been passed in June. A new superintendent had come on the scene in August. A citizens' committee was scheduled to report its recommendations for improving the secondary curriculum the following spring. This curriculum study was being paralleled by professional staff studies. Building needs were being studied by a university group. It was apparent that the school system was faced with both extensive building and operating requirements. Change in the community's structure was reflected in the board of education which gained representation from surrounding growth areas.

At this time inevitable differences of opinion were being expressed about many facets of the educational program. A six mill operating levy was to expire in December. Therefore accurate knowledge about the kind of school program the community would financially support was of crucial importance. This situation gave rise to several pertinent questions:

> To what degree would the community as a whole agree with the forthcoming recommendations of the Citizens' Curriculum Committee?
>
> To what degree would the community's perception of specific areas of strength and weakness in the school program coincide with that of the professional staff?
>
> With whom in the community were school communications effective?
>
> If we in the schools were not communicating effectively, what groups lacked what kinds of understandings?

In this setting, it was imperative for us to know what kinds of people liked - or disliked - what about our school program, and why. In other words, we felt it necessary to determine the level of community support as accurately as possible in order to formulate an appropriate millage proposal. Our objective was to put a millage proposal before the people which would merit maximum support rather than to blindly place on the ballot an issue which would either: 1) request too much, regardless of the need, and thereby lose, or 2) request much less than the community desired and was willing to support.

It should be added that although there was concern about a successful millage issue and its significance for an improved educational program, there was optimism concerning the long-range implications of the study. We felt that the nature and level of the school-community relationship could be strengthened not just during, but between elections, through accurate information about the community. Definitive direction for improvement of educational opportunity for our children and youth could, and did, emerge from the data provided by the study.

Launching the Study

The Local Coordinator. The first formal assignment of communications responsibilities to a staff member within the school system came into effect through a redefinition (in August, 1960) of the duties of the administrative assistant to the superintendent of schools. Within this assignment fell two related primary duties: 1) coordinating the community survey locally, and 2) guiding the informational effort for the millage election (estimated to be from a year to eighteen months hence). Both efforts were begun about the same time.

Determining the Type of Study

Obviously several factors had to be considered in attempting to determine the type of survey to be undertaken. Some of the more important considerations are as follows:

1. The degree of reliability and validity of the data likely to be produced. This is determined by adequacy of the sample, questionnaire, study design, and analysis of data.
2. The consultant services available regarding the scope of the analysis and interpretation of the data from a meaningful conceptual framework.
3. Local personnel, financial, and time resources available.
4. Interpreting the desirability of the specific type of survey to be recommended to the Board of Education and the community.

Launching the Survey

Having determined in this instance that a study by professional researchers was both necessary and feasible, the board approved the recommendation which led to a series of study phases.

1. Determining Goals. Joint planning by the school system and the professional researchers was required during this phase. A meeting of about twenty people in the school system and community was scheduled. Board of Education members, members of the professional staff, representatives of the Citizens' Curriculum Committee and the local press participated.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to identify general areas in which it was thought desirable to obtain information. From this fruitful discussion, the researchers noted and helped identify such areas. Group members were encouraged to submit additional suggestions to the local coordinator as they came to mind after the meeting.

2. Questionnaire Development. On the basis of this information, the researchers developed a questionnaire which was feasible to administer within the maximum desirable time of 45 minutes. The common problem of limiting the number of questions to be asked was resolved. Further clarification with school personnel of various parts of the questionnaire, particularly

with regard to desirable sociological data, culminated in the eventual field testing of the instrument by trained interviewers provided by the research staff.

3. Field Work. The field phase of the study was begun the first week in April. All field work was done by the researchers and their professional interviewing staff. The school system assisted as necessary by providing work space, letters of identification for interviewers, notices to newspapers, minor logistical support, and liaison. The major part of this phase was completed in two weeks; call-backs required an additional six week period.

4. Related Activities. In January the board and the administration began to consider the possibilities of a millage election--a consideration based upon the knowledge held and becoming available from the on-going studies and surveys. Preliminary planning indicated that the following November appeared to be an opportune time to go before the people. A six mill operating levy was scheduled to expire in December. Realistic budgeting and staffing could be done if the available financial support were known beforehand. Elementary school buildings and additions, if approved, could be completed before the next fall's school opening.

The superintendent of schools held a community educational planning conference on April 4-7 in order to place the needs of the District before the citizens. During day and evening sessions several hundred representative citizens heard:

1) the Board of Education discuss its written goals.
2) preliminary reports of the Citizens' Curriculum committees and salary committees.
3) preliminary reports by outside professional building survey and community survey consultants.
4) panels of outside and local professionals and speakers discuss new developments in education.

All sessions included stimulating discussion periods. Broad coverage occurred in the newspapers and in the District's monthly newsletter to citizens.

Following this conference the administrative staff began the preliminary job of compiling the needs of the District for the next five years. This was in preparation to formulating an election proposal to be considered by the Board of Education.

Data Feedback

The survey staff began to feed back information as it became available from data processing. Information was relayed through consultations with the survey coordinator, administrative staff and the Board of Education. Further analysis of data was provided by the researchers as the needs seemed to indicate. Straight run data concerning total community's feelings about its schools became available about June 1; data about voting behavior, about August 1. Findings were made available to those who joined in planning the informational campaign for the election (mainly the Board of Education and the Administrative Council of the District). The research staff also prepared a series of five newspaper articles which ran in the local press prior to the eventual election in November.

Utilization of Data

It is outside the scope of this chapter to attempt to indicate all of the ways in which the data were used--and continue to be used. While it is true that conscious, specific use of the research findings entered the on-going planning immediately in numerous ways, it is also true that much of the information became a part of the overall storehouse of factual knowledge upon which future decisions could be based.

The following discussion focuses on ways in which survey research data may be used to broaden the base of responsible decision making.

Some Implications of the Data

The research data provided information concerning the two critical problems which confronted the school administration and the board:

1. What kind of educational program did our community actually desire, and
2. How could we best insure that actual support for the program would be registered at the polls ?

In brief, the survey findings were these: the community desired a superior educational program . . . one stressing sound teaching and a broad program. Support for such a program existed both among the general population, and among the select minority of the population who were registered and tended to vote in school elections.

What Kind of Educational Program Did Our Community Actually Desire ?

The results of the survey provided a variety of clues which indicated that the community desired a superior educational program for its children, atypically ranking this above concern for facilities. Thus, it was known that the improvements deemed necessary by the superintendent and Board of Education were supported by the people. Furthermore, the basic emphases emerging from the professional and citizens' curriculum studies were likely to be accepted by the community at large.

Some of the highlights of these findings are as follows:

Regarding Personnel. As noted in part I of the report, school personnel work performance was rated highly, a significant morale factor. The survey indicated that the citizens desired to recruit and retain an adequate number of the best possible teachers. This finding led the suggestions for improvements made to the board and administration; it supported the recently established position of Director of Personnel and led to the greatly expanded staffing efforts which followed. Reduction of pupil/teacher and pupil/counselor ratio was also highlighted.

A critical factor in accomplishing the above goal was the district's ability to reward superior performance through superior salaries. Efforts were increased to attract instructional services which were in line with the community's level of educational aspirations. A new competitive salary schedule was projected.

The community supported the establishment of a competitive salary schedule--but also felt that taxation was at too high a level. As a result of this finding subsequent communications activity was directed toward helping the community establish a more realistic frame of reference regarding salaries and the taxation necessary to provide them. This entailed gathering comparative data on a regional and nation-wide basis. Communicating the need for increased budget allocations for instruction became the major focus of the millage informational activities which followed.

Regarding Curriculum and Special Services. As previously indicated, extensive curriculum study by citizens and professional groups preceded the research. Intensified financial problems in 1958 and 1959 permitted a minimum of curriculum improvements. The defeat of a 4 mill proposal in March was followed by the passage of a 1.9 mill operating levy in June, 1960. The June levy provided funds essential for competing temporarily for teachers on a local area basis.

The administration and board were interested in obtaining knowledge about community reactions to certain program areas, namely--stress on certain subjects or activities, foreign language in elementary school, "fundamentals", citizenship values, homework, and special services for atypical children. The research indicated citizen approval of the current program, particularly regarding the teaching of "fundamentals" and citizenship values. Of special significance was the higher degree of approval indicated by citizens who had children in the public schools as compared with those who did not. This research finding suggested the need for finding appropriate ways of communicating with those having limited opportunity for becoming directly involved with the schools.

The following findings resulted in program changes as stated below:

Elementary Level

1. More stress on the "3 R's"
2. Foreign language--81 per cent favored or strongly favored this program; it has subsequently been scheduled for inclusion in the curriculum
3. Special services--(visiting teachers, nurses, etc.) An unusual degree of support existed for these programs. For the seven special service programs, the percentage of respondents considering them "not important" varied from a low of 1 per cent to a "high" of 11 per cent. Clearly the community was equally concerned with providing services for "all of the children of all the people". On the other hand, from 41 per cent to 81 per cent of the people did not know that certain special services and education programs were available. This finding has resulted in appropriate communications activities. It stimulated a local news reporter to prepare a series of excellent feature stories that fall.

Secondary Level

1. More stress on language, literature, and citizenship
2. College admissions preparation was desired by the public (however, only 3 per cent felt that current preparation was "poor" or "very poor").
3. Homework--the significant finding related that 72 per cent of the respondents had no attitudes pertaining to homework. A written policy is currently being developed for communication to all parents.

General

1. A significant number (21 per cent) felt that the schools were doing only an average job of educating pupils with outstanding ability. This finding reinforced the curriculum committee's recommendations regarding more differentiated instruction and course content.

Regarding Finances and Taxation. Before the research was contemplated, a new position, Director of Finance, was instituted to improve the financial function of the District. This move apparently had public support.

Research findings revealed that although the public was supportive of general financial practices, only 41 per cent of the total population felt that the local school funds were "quite wisely" or "very wisely" used. This response indicated significantly less public support for handling of school funds than for the great majority of other school functions. An "open door informational policy" was instituted, with news releases, newsletters, annual reports, etc., consciously reporting details of improvements being effected, investment of funds, and spending of tax monies.

Another relevant finding, with particular pertinence for future millage campaigns, revealed that 64 per cent of the respondents felt that Birmingham property taxes were "higher" or "much higher" than those in surrounding communities. A related finding indicated that 46 per cent of the respondents felt the schools already had enough money to "do the job", while only 18 per cent thought they had insufficient funds. These results indicated an obligation to interpret to the community its high level of educational aspirations, coupled with the consequent required level of financial support. This was accomplished by comparing Birmingham to similar communities throughout the nation; through this comparison it became evident that taxation levels were proportionately justifiable.

The Building Program. An early research finding which required immediate attention was the community's feelings about the building program. It may be recalled that a significant 38 per cent felt that building costs were too high in terms of value received.

A careful staff study was initiated to determine whether building costs could be cut without impairing the educational effectiveness and maintenance efficiency of future construction. Visitations were made to observe other building programs. The public was made aware of the intent to plan carefully every phase of the building program. These plans were communicated in many ways and by many persons prior to and during the election campaign. Citizens were subsequently consulted regarding plans developed for the two major building projects which were later approved by the voters.

Research findings showed that a considerable number of people felt that school buildings should be made more available for community use. Policy changes were put into effect which liberalized use of school facilities.

The above finding remains an area for further analysis and evaluation. It is interesting to note that expressions of need to use the school buildings arose from persons having no children in the public schools.

THE MILLAGE CAMPAIGN

The availability of accurate data and a useful conceptual framework regarding the level of educational support in a community suggest that the school administrator is confronted with three basic problems in leading his community toward improved educational opportunity. In the first place, he is concerned with improving the ongoing latent or attitudinal support which eventually must be tapped for support at the polls. Secondly, he is concerned with the appropriateness of the proposal which must be placed before the community. Thirdly, he must be concerned with the extent to which latent support can be converted into manifest support on election day.

Maximizing Attitudinal Support

The research data provided information concerning two "kinds" of community support for the schools. The first type of support concerns the attitude of people in the whole community toward the schools. Confidence of the people in school policies, in the school staff, and in various practices and personalities are significant factors. The professional administrator must therefore be concerned with continuing and strengthening supportive attitudes, and with evaluating those program aspects which elicit lesser degrees of support.

One important finding elicited the information that supportive attitudes bear a strong relationship to child and/or personal involvement in school affairs. This finding prompted efforts to further involve "non-involved" segments of the population in broadened school programs, and through added use of school buildings and facilities.

The second type of support--active voting behavior--was also found to be related to child and/or personal involvement in school affairs. Thus the pertinence and ramifications of a school program designed to yield closer personal involvement in school programs and activities is apparent. Of particular concern are those rather large segments of the population which are currently "detached" from school programs and activities (e.g. older people with no children enrolled in the schools).

The Election. Preliminary planning for the election began more than a year before it was eventually held. Of major initial concern was the establishment of lines of communication with community groups which would 1) reinforce expressed confidence in the schools, and 2) set forth developing needs.

The following research findings relate directly to the proposals which were placed on the ballot. They were of considerable significance in assessing the setting into which the proposals would be cast.

1. Prospects for passage of an operating proposal appeared to be good if the proposal reflected the desires of the community and if the latent support could be activated through appropriate communication. Sixty-two per cent of the respondents were favorably inclined toward the operational needs of the schools.
2. Only 46 per cent of the people felt the need for more buildings. It was deemed necessary to relate building function to program as well as to take into account the community's desire for greater economy in building.
3. A relatively high degree of confidence resided in the work of the school staff and the Board of Education.

4. Respondents felt the economic climate to be good.
5. Research results confirmed the improvements recommended by the citizens' and professional staff curriculum studies.
6. The survey brought about certain changes in practice (previously discussed) which were communicated to the community in timely and positive fashion.
7. The survey pinpointed areas of lack of information and of misinformation which was handled in a positive manner in advance of the election.
8. The survey gave direction to the intensive informational campaign which immediately preceded the election. Results were utilized in reinforcing emphases built into the election proposal, mainly elements of an improved instructional program.
9. As survey results became available, the magnitude of the eventual communications problem gradually developed in view of:
   a. The discrepancies which existed between the community's current level of support and its educational aspirations.
   b. The reluctance of many supportive groups to register and vote. (This situation could easily lead to an unrepresentative minority controlling the vote.)
   c. Realization that the major focus of communications activities must center on intangibles such as curriculum needs and recruitment of the best possible professional staff.
   d. A high percentage of the people in the community felt they could understand and wanted information on educational issues.
   e. The high percentage of people who felt only partially informed about their schools.
10. An atypically high percentage of citizens indicated a feeling that their involvement in school affairs was significant and worthwhile.

The sum of the above permitted a feeling of cautious optimism.

The Proposal. Shaping a millage proposal eventually reflects the elements of "what for" and "how much".

Studies by the administration (based on citizens' recommendations and the professional building survey) indicated an immediate need for 11 operating mills plus a $4,915,000 building program. Best judgments by administration and the Board concluded that a 5 mill increase in operating millage was reasonable in terms of need; the system was capable of assimilating and effectively utilizing this amount of additional revenue. This significant increase in operational support was offset by a 2.4 mill reduction in millage levied for buildings. Additional requests within three years were envisioned and communicated through a five year budget projection based on the anticipated support level.

The difficult task of judging and setting forth--the purposes and amounts of community acceptance of the proposal was considered by the administration. Guidelines had been set by the research team (for instance, previously stated findings pertaining to negative attitudes toward building as opposed to positive support for operating costs). An ad hoc citizens' advisory committee of 35 was requested to review the proposal. Short and long term needs were thoroughly discussed and advice was sought as to the acceptability of the building and operating proposals. Upon concurrence of this committee, the election date was established for November, at which time these revised proposals were to be placed on the ballot. The final intensive communications effort was co-chaired by two citizen volunteers, Mr. George Whitehead, representative of the PTA Council, and Mr. Pell Hollingshead, chairman of the Independent Citizens for the Birmingham Schools. The writer served as a third member of the team.

The Campaign. Activities during the final informational campaign were directed toward two specific ends: 1) to provide reference information to the entire community, and 2) to activate the latent community support.

Research findings stressed the salient importance of activating the following groups, known to be supportive of the schools:

1. PTA's
2. Recent arrivals in the community
3. Renters
4. Managers, officials and proprietors

The Board of Education assumed responsibility for providing information to all citizens. Four all-resident mailings were made from 3 to 8 weeks before the election; detailed information was provided on the proposals.

Responsibility for activating community group support was assumed by citizens. The co-chairmen organized 750 block workers utilizing local PTA leadership. They distributed information to all residents, garnered 557 new registrations, and conducted follow-up activities on election day. Emphasis on PTA membership and new residents to the community was encouraged. Workers were provided with a handbook, a four-page brochure prepared by citizens with board and administration cooperation, and pertinent registration, voting, and ballot information.

A series of fifty-five audio-visual presentations was directed toward activating PTA members, business and service groups, recent arrivals in the community, and other groups which the research had shown were attitudinally supportive, but not very active at the polls (PTA members, excepted). (An example of the usefulness of the research data can be seen in the superintendent's communications with service groups. He indicated the need for improved teacher salaries through factual data which showed that no teacher's salary fell above the lower third of the community's income groups.) A newspaper editorial based on the survey encouraged involvement of newcomers. Teachers were encouraged to play their roles as citizens of the community. Newspaper coverage which pointed to school needs was extensive, including a series of four articles reporting the results of the survey and two positive editorials.

These efforts resulted in the second highest number of voters in a local school election (approximately 25 per cent of the registered voters), and one which was a representative cross-section of the community. The election carried with a 62 per cent favorable vote. No organized opposition developed as had occurred in the two previous elections. The issues presented lost in only two of thirteen precincts. Many retired citizens resided in one of these two precincts. In the other losing precinct no block organization materialized.

In summary, the survey provided guidelines regarding the following:

1. The school program desired by the community
2. The emphases reflected in the proposals
3. Methods of communicating proposals and needs to various groups and to the community as a whole
4. The timing of the election
5. The improvement of latent support
6. The activation of latent support at election time

Continuing Utilization of the Research Data

Occasions to continue to utilize the survey data occur almost daily. A few of the more important utilizations include:

1. As a factor in policy and program development
2. For student teacher and new teacher orientation
3. As a data source for individual, institutional, and professional staff studies
4. Provision of information regarding sociological data about the community
5. Background information in meeting with local school staffs

Some Continuing Implications

This study can serve to encourage study of dimensions of educational support in other specific and unique settings; it may well be that this is one of the most important implications of research of this type. It can be assumed that current patterns of factors which relate to support for public education will prevail on the American scene for the foreseeable future. Since the best possible educational opportunity is the only avenue to security and progress of a free society, one can conclude that such goals are attainable only to the degree that an enlightened citizenry can--and will--support efforts for their attainment.

Careful consideration and further study is warranted regarding the following three dimensions.

The Role of the PTA. This study showed that formal group membership is a highly important factor in activating its participants to vote. It is significant to note that in Birmingham, only PTA membership is predictive of both latent and manifest support above the level of the community in general. It could well be that popular commentary deprecating the efforts of this group could erode the very base of support which has helped to provide quality in education. A function of PTA not yet tapped could be the recruitment of newcomers to the community (two years or less), for their participation (and support) currently appears to be lost.

Involvement. It appears that a decrease of involvement in school affairs goes hand in hand with a decrease in support. This provides a challenge to school personnel to explore more significant ways of appropriately involving groups of citizens in school affairs at all levels. If constructive and enlightened progress is to be made, there is a commitment for school people and citizens to seek mutual understanding--a sharing of security and progress within education. Clearly, the challenge most critically concerns the groups who have no children enrolled in the public schools.

Image. Results of this survey indicate that no significant differences are held by citizens regarding their evaluation of the work of teachers, administration, and the Board of Education. This would suggest that elements of public support could very well be based upon a composite evaluation of all who focus on the learning task, irrespective of the role played.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to indicate some of the ways in which a community survey was of significance to a school community as it sought to improve the educational opportunity of its children and youth. It is not without limitations. It is hoped, however, that this effort may serve as a base for future studies, both locally and elsewhere.

CHAPTER 4

CONTRIVED AND NATURAL CHANGES IN LEVELS OF SUPPORT

There are two major ways in which level of support for the schools may be changed. One way is through efforts by, or on behalf of the school system to change public opinion, or to activate voters. Such efforts will henceforth be referred to as "contrived", since they involve more or less consciously directed procedures to improve the community-school relationship, or to win a specific millage election.

The other way in which support levels may undergo change is through the effects of various natural social processes. For instance, migration patterns, or changes in birth and mortality rates may so modify the social characteristics of the population that the support level is in turn affected. Likewise, changes in economic conditions, or the occurrence of certain political events may also have an impact upon school support. In brief, variations in social, economic, or political conditions will henceforth be labelled "natural" changes, since these circumstances are not created by or for the public schools.

This chapter will undertake a brief examination of both contrived and natural influences upon the level of support experienced by the Birmingham Public Schools. While this task is admittedly too ambitious to cover in one chapter of this report, it is hoped that enough data are provided to indicate the intrinsic merits of distinguishing contrived from natural change.

The opportunity to study the contrived changes in level of support appeared after the 1961 survey (described in Chapter 2), when reactions on the part of school personnel and citizens groups to the survey data prompted an action program (described in Chapter 3). It may be recalled from the previous chapter that the 1961 Birmingham study revealed that certain segments of the population were attitudinally supportive, but quite inactive at the polls. A 750 man citizens committee was therefore organized to personally contact members of the community and encourage them to register and vote. Moreover, this same study revealed a substantial resistance to the past building program, and a rather widespread feeling among the citizens that they were not always kept as well informed about school matters as they might be. As a result of these findings, a committee was activated to study building policies. Several modifications in school construction were agreed upon, and these changes in policy were communicated back to the people via the local newspaper and by direct mail. In a further effort to communicate more effectively, the Board Briefs, a direct mail pamphlet, was sent to all households in the school district approximately once a month.

The preceding circumstances therefore presented an excellent opportunity to examine the results of contrived efforts to modify the level of support for the schools. Two major questions may therefore be raised: did these efforts modify community attitudes toward the schools, and did registration and voting increase? Answers to these questions are pursued in the first part of this chapter.

As for the influence of natural phenomena upon level of support, the latter part of the chapter explores the effects of selective migration to this community upon level of school support. Since Birmingham is a suburb located within the perimeter of the Detroit metropolitan area, it is subject to a flow of new residents into the community as a result of metropolitan deconcentration. Thus a disproportionately high percentage of younger married couples of relatively high educational and occupational backgrounds move into this area. The implications of Birmingham's position in this broader pattern of urban deconcentration is explored, and the relationship of selective migration to level of school support is examined.

I. CONTRIVED CHANGES IN LEVEL OF SUPPORT

A. Some Changes of Attitude: 1961 to 1962

The following four tables are comparisons from the general population samples of 1961 and 1962, and each indicates that some degree of attitude change, most of it favorable to the schools, occurred in the course of this year.

Table 4-1 shows that in 1961, slightly less than 2/3 of the people in the community felt that school funds were used wisely: one year later, 3/4 of the people were of the opinion that school funds were used wisely. Moreover, during this same year, the percentage of people who felt school funds were used unwisely declined from 18 per cent to 5 per cent.

TABLE 4-1*

OPINIONS ABOUT HOW WELL SCHOOL FUNDS ARE USED

"Generally speaking, how well would you say local school funds are used?"	1961	1962
Wisely	63%	75%
Wisely about half of the time	19	20
Unwisely	18	5
Totals	100%	100%
Number of cases	295	309

Table 4-2 reveals a 10 per cent increase between 1961 and 1962 in the number of people who felt they could not judge whether value had been received in the school building program of the past ten years. In 1961, 35 per cent of the people were unable to offer such a judgment compared with 45 per cent in 1962. It may also be observed that although there was a slight decline during this period in the percentage of persons who felt the school buildings cost more than they should, there was also a decline in the percentage of persons who felt the building costs were about right. Therefore, the major fact conveyed by Table 4-2 seems to be that from 1961 to 1962 public impressions of the past building program did not improve as much as they increased in doubt.

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* See Appendix A for sampling error, and Appendix B for significance of difference in this and the following tables.

TABLE 4-2

OPINIONS OF THE BUILDING PROGRAM OF THE PAST TEN YEARS

"During the past ten years, ten new schools have been built in this community. What is your opinion of the cost of these buildings in terms of value received?"

	1961	1962
Cost more than they should	38%	31%
Costs were about right	26	21
Costs were low	1	3
No opinion	35	45
Totals	100%	100%
Number of cases	445	490

While the preceding table indicates no tangible favorable change in citizen's attitudes toward the past building program, another question was directed at awareness of efforts being made to improve the present and future building program. This question, asked in the 1962 study, ran as follows: "In some communities school officials become increasingly aware of the kinds of buildings people want to have built, while in other communities the building program departs from the wishes of the people. During the past year or two, do you feel the school building policies in Birmingham have improved, remained the same, or degenerated . . . are farther from what the people want?" This question brought forth the responses presented in Table 4-3.

TABLE 4-3

PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGE IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING POLICIES

"During the past year or two, the school building policies in Birmingham have:"

	1962
Improved	43%
Remained the same	11
Degenerated	6
No opinion	40
Totals	100%
Number of cases	490

Prior to the 1961 millage election there were indications that many people in the community felt they were not adequately informed about school affairs. The 1961 study probed this matter, and then re-stated the question in the 1962 survey. Table 4-4 below shows a striking change in this one-year interval. It would appear that the combined efforts of the newspaper, the direct mail campaign, and the citizens group block campaign resulted in the citizens of this community feeling much more satisfied about the information they receive concerning school affairs.

TABLE 4-4

PERCEPTION OF EFFORTS MADE TO KEEP THE COMMUNITY INFORMED ABOUT SCHOOL AFFAIRS

"Do you feel that people in Birmingham are kept adequately informed about school affairs?"

	1961	1962
Adequately informed	58%	85%
Not adequately informed	42	15
Totals	100%	100%
Number of cases	445	490

In summary, Tables 4-2 and 4-3 suggest that while community opinion has not become more favorable with respect to the past building program, there is considerable awareness of change and of efforts to construct new buildings in harmony with community wishes. Allied with these facts are the findings of Table 4-4 which show that people in the community felt they were much better informed about school affairs in 1962 than they were in 1961.

B. The Citizens Committee's Block Campaign

Of major concern to the citizens committee was the finding from the 1961 study that Birmingham is a fairly mobile community, and the contributions of newcomers to civic affairs is at a low level. The newcomers do not tend to register and vote, nor do they belong to formal associations as frequently as do older residents. Therefore, while the committee directed its efforts at the community at large, particular attention was given to young married couples with pre-school age children, the "typical" recent migrants to Birmingham.

While it is impossible within the purview of this study to evaluate the work of this committee, some limited reflections are possible. For instance, it might be interesting to know how many people are aware, one year later, of having been called on by a member of this committee. This known, we might then wish to discover what the reaction is to such a visit.

An analysis of the data reveals that in the general population, 14 per cent of the people recall being visited by a member of the citizens committee. A simple projection from the sample to the general population which it represents indicates that the citizens committee made 7,000 calls which were remembered one year later.

The response to these calls is shown in Table 4-5. While 1/5 of the citizens who were called on reported that the call was of little or no help to them, 4/5 report the call as being helpful.

TABLE 4-5

IMPRESSIONS OF CALLS MADE BY THE CITIZENS COMMITTEE

"And was this call helpful to you?"

Very helpful	17%
Helpful	64
Of little or no help	19
Totals	100%
Number of cases	66

From the standpoint of coverage and community acceptance, it would appear that the citizens committee could have exerted a measurable influence in the election. Table 4-6 provides some indications of this potential influence, since this table shows a summary of factors which respondents recall as having influenced them to register. Actually, two questions were asked, the first being an open-ended question which queried, "Thinking back to the time when you registered to vote, could you recall what things stimulated you to go and register?". This question was then followed by a check list of items to help probe the matter more fully. As might be anticipated, the open-ended responses attributed registration largely to personal values. For instance, 70 per cent stated (in one manner or another) that they registered to vote simply because it was their duty and responsibility as citizens to do so. The check list, however, provided a few refinements from the first question. While failing to help all of the respondents penetrate beyond the veil of personal values to significant interpersonal experiences, some persons were so assisted by this list. In Table 4-6 it may be observed that 22 per cent acknowledged the influence of election issues, and 11 per cent admitted influence exerted by a spouse or another member of the family. Next in line, 8 per cent said they had been influenced by a member of the citizens committee, while an equal number admitted being influenced by a newspaper article. Of course, the predominant characteristic of this table is the fact that 56 per cent of the new registrants were unaware of any force other than their own personal values. Later analysis in Chapter 5 will throw added light on this issue wherein it is found that people whose "personal values" alone led them to vote tend to be people who belong to formal associations.

TABLE 4-6

FACTORS WHICH NEW REGISTRANTS RECALL HAVING HELPED THEM DECIDE TO REGISTER FOR THE SCHOOL ELECTIONS

"Did any of the following factors help you along in your decision to register and vote ?"	
Personal values alone	56%
Spouse or family member alone	1
Specific issues alone	1
Personal values coupled with one or more of the following:	
Specific election issue	22
Spouse or other family member	11
Newspapers reminded me	8
Member of a citizens committee	8
A friend urged me	5
A school bulletin reminded me	4
Totals	*
Number of cases	132

Tables 4-1 through 4-6 appear to bear out the speculation that contrived efforts to modify the school support level met with success. While the point is not conclusively proven by the data, it is at least known that following some rather intensive communications efforts the proportions of certain favorable attitudes toward the schools did increase in the community.

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* Totals more than 100 per cent because some respondents said more than one factor influenced their decision.

However, two sobering facts must also be considered along with the preceding findings. First, the proportion of people who voted favorably for the November millage proposal did not exceed the proportion of people who said they were favorably inclined toward a similar kind of proposal earlier that year, before the campaign was waged. Might it not therefore be concluded that the campaign to improve attitudes and encourage people to vote had no significant effect upon the eventual millage election? Before drawing such a conclusion, however, it would be well to observe that while the pre-election survey revealed 62 per cent of the people favorably inclined toward an operational type of millage proposal, the question which was asked did not specify how many mills would be requested. When the operational millage proposal was eventually placed on the ballot the amount of the request was 11 mills. It is therefore quite possible that many people who had originally said they were favorably inclined toward a millage increase would not have remained affirmative in this view at the 11 mill rate had it not been for the campaign.

A second fact must also be considered. During the campaign to register new voters, a total of 551 persons were registered between June and November, 1961 (the period of the campaign). When this figure is compared with data from similar months in other years, it becomes apparent that such natural phenomena as a presidential election (1960), or a state election with a major issue (constitutional revision in 1962) cause the contrived efforts to pale in comparison.

TABLE 4-7

NUMBER OF NEW REGISTRANTS BETWEEN
JUNE AND NOVEMBER: 1961-63

1960	5,817
1961	551
1962	4,133
1963	352

II. NATURAL CHANGES IN THE LEVEL OF SUPPORT

The impact of natural changes upon support levels in comparison with contrived changes is crudely illustrated in the preceding Table 4-7. If the 551 new registrants who turned up during the 1961 campaign are compared with the 352 who registered in a comparable time period in 1963 (a non-campaign period), the most that could possibly be said of the campaign is that it may have accounted for approximately 200 new registrants. While this is assuredly a worth while difference, it is still a minor influence when compared with changes which occurred during those years of major political events. For instance, the 551 new registrants of the 1961 period are less than 10 per cent of the number who registered in a comparable period in the 1960 presidential year, and only 13 per cent of the number who registered in preparation for the state election of 1962.

A. Population Deconcentration and Selective Migration in the Detroit Area

The factor of major political events is of passing interest only in this report, while the phenomenon of urban deconcentration and allied migration patterns is treated as an important natural factor influencing school support levels. More specifically, it is felt that in order to fully appraise Birmingham's support level, this community must be viewed from the broader perspective of its position in the Detroit metropolitan area.

The deconcentration of urban populations throughout the nation is a phenomenon which is accompanied by a pronounced differential distribution of population characteristics. For instance, in most urban areas, it is the young white child-rearing couples of higher educational and income categories who tend to move to the suburban zones. And, contrariwise, the inner city zones tend to harbor a disproportionate number of older people, single and detached persons, and non-child-rearers. It is therefore pertinent to inquire into the significance of the differential migration patterns in the Detroit area with respect to its meaning for school support in the suburb of Birmingham.

Table 4-8 has been adapted from *A Social Profile of Detroit/1956*, a study conducted by the University of Michigan's sociology department, through the Institute for Social Research. The residence zones employed in this analysis are as follow: Inner city is a radius within 6 miles of the old Detroit city hall. Outer city is an area extending from the inner city boundary to the city limits of Detroit. The suburban fringe area extends from the Detroit city limits to the boundary of the Detroit Standard Metropolitan Area. Birmingham, incidentally, is located in the northern portion of the suburban fringe zone.

TABLE 4-8*

FAMILY COMPOSITION, AGE, FAMILY INCOME, AND HOME OWNERSHIP STATUS, BY RESIDENCE LOCATION IN THE DETROIT METROPOLITAN AREA

Family Composition	Inner City	Outer City	Suburban Fringe	All**
Married, young children	20%	26%	37%	28%
Married, no young children	49	59	47	52
Single, widowed, divorced	31	15	16	20
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Age				
21 to 34 years	37	33	42	37
35 to 49 years	31	35	34	34
50 years and over	32	32	24	29
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Family Income				
Under $4,000	42	18	15	24
$4,000 to $6,999	42	42	37	40
$7,000 and over	16	40	48	36
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Home Ownership				
Owns or is buying home	34	73	84	64
Renting	66	27	16	36
	100%	100%	100%	100%

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*Adapted from *A Social Profile of Detroit/1956* (Ann Arbor:Detroit Area Study, Department of Sociology and the Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Research of the University of Michigan, 1957), p. 17.

**Each category is based on a total of 813 cases.

Table 4-8 provides an index of the extent to which the younger child-rearing couples locate outwardly, while the older people, single persons, or non-child-rearing couples tend to locate inwardly. However, the full force of the "outgoing tendency" on the part of child-rearing couples is not completely obvious in this table. For instance, if we consider the fact that Negroes are not as free to move outwardly as whites, and that low income may serve as a deterrent to outward mobility, then the tendencies portrayed by Table 4-8 might actually be stronger than indicated. Table 4-9[1] provides controls for the factors of race and income, and reveals an even more pronounced tendency for higher income white child-rearing couples to locate outwardly, and for single persons and non-child-rearing couples to locate inwardly in the Detroit area. It is a particularly striking fact that only 7 per cent of these people with pre-school age children have settled in inner city, while only 3 per cent of the single people who are 40 years or older have settled in the suburban zone.

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1. Table 4-9 was compiled by the author from data gathered by the University of Michigan sociology department's Detroit Area Study. Data from five different years (1951, 1953, 1954, 1956, and 1958) are included in this table. This analysis provides a total of 3,333 cases. While this table is not current with the present study, it does depict a gross general pattern, and provides a means of indicating the extent to which non-whites of higher income levels have chosen different residence locations according to their family life cycle status.

TABLE 4-9

PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF WHITE ADULTS WHOSE ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME TOTALS $5000 OR MORE, BY RESIDENCE LOCATION, AND BY FAMILY LIFE CYCLE STAGE

Family Life Cycle Stages	Inner City	Outer City	Suburban Fringe	Totals	
				Per cent	Number Cases
Single, and					
under 40 years	25%	50%	25%	100%	141
40 years and over	41	56	3	100	72
Married: no children, and					
under 40 years	20	40	40	100	231
40 years and over	19	49	32	100	783
Married: children, and					
youngest child under 6	7	39	54	100	1073
youngest child 6 to 18	11	44	45	100	687
Widowed, separated, divorced, and					
no children under 18	28	41	31	100	242
children	20	42	38	100	103

B. The Social Characteristics of New Birmingham Residents

The next two tables add to the picture of selective suburban migration which is reflected in Tables 4-8 and 4-9. People who have lived in the Birmingham school district for less than five years (the new residents) differ in social characteristics from people who have lived in the area five or more years (the old residents). To a greater extent than the old residents, the newcomers are younger, have more school age children, have attended more college . . . and are more supportive of the public schools.

Table 4-10 also includes the social characteristics of the people who have moved out of the Birmingham school district in the year 1961-1962. These data were derived from an analysis of those people who were interviewed in the 1961 general population sample, and who had moved out of the school district when they were called on in the 1962 study. Although the number of cases is relatively small (61), the data suggest that the out-movers are a different group than the new residents. For instance, compared to the new residents, the out-movers include a higher proportion of renters, more are 50 years of age or older, a larger proportion (49 per cent) have no pre-school or school-age children, and fewer have completed 4 years or more of college.

Table 4-11 presents the voting response of those persons who state that they voted in the November millage election. Before viewing this table, it is well to bear in mind that the old residents declare a greater tendency to vote in this election, with only 1/3 stating that they remained away from the polls, while 2/3 of the newcomers say they did not vote in that election. However, among those who say they voted, the new residents are considerably more supportive of both the operational and the building issues than are the old residents.

TABLE 4-10

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF OLD AND NEW BIRMINGHAM RESIDENTS

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS	Old Residents	New Residents	Out-Movers
Home Ownership Status			
Owns	49%	17%	28%
Buying	43	54	27
Renting	8	29	45
Age of Respondent			
21 to 39	24%	45%	45%
40 to 49	29	34	16
50 and over	47	21	32
Age of Youngest Child			
Under 6 years	22%	37%	32%
6 to 18 years	35	27	19
Over 18 years	25	16	10
Inapplicable (no children)	18	20	39
Educational Level			
Less than 4 years college	66%	56%	64%
Four or more years college	34	44	36
Number of cases	333	150	61

TABLE 4-11

BEHAVIOR OF PERSONS WHO SAY THEY VOTED IN THE NOVEMBER, 1961 MILLAGE ELECTION, BY OLD AND NEW BIRMINGHAM RESIDENTS

	Old Residents	New Residents
"On the operating millage proposal, did you vote:"		
Yes	57%	77%
No	20	11
Can't recall	23	12
Totals	100%	100%
Number of cases	223	47
"And on the bond proposition granting authority to finance the school building program, did you vote:"		
Yes	58%	74%
No	20	13
Can't recall	22	13
Totals	100%	100%
Number of cases	223	46

Since the foregoing tables have demonstrated a strong tendency for young white child-rearing couples of higher income levels to move to suburban zones in general, and specifically to Birmingham, the question now arises concerning the effects which such migration patterns have upon changing school support levels in this community. One way of getting to the significance of this problem is through a comparison of the social characteristics of newly registered voters with all voters on the one hand and the general population on the other hand. To what extent are these new registrants recent migrants?

Are they child-rearers, highly educated, and home buyers? And, to what extent do the new registrants differ in the level of support which they are willing to accord the schools in comparison with the older registrants? The following three tables indicate the extent to which new registrants . . . people who registered between June and November of 1961 . . . differ in social characteristics from all registered voters, and from the general population.

C. The Social Characteristics of the New Registrants Reflect Migration Patterns

TABLE 4-12

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THREE SAMPLES, BY LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE AREA, AND BY HOME OWNERSHIP

Length of Residence	General Population	All Registrants	New Registrants
Less than 5 years	31%	18%	74%
5 to 15 years	49	57	18
15 years or more	20	25	8
	100%	100%	100%
Home Ownership			
Owns	39%	50%	17%
Buying	45	43	69
Renting	15	6	12
Other	1	1	2
Totals	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	490	160	132

Table 4-12 reveals that the new registrants are mostly newcomers to the community, 3/4 having lived in the Birmingham area less than 5 years. Moreover, they tend to be home purchasers, a rather common characteristic of people who move to suburban zones.

Table 4-13 indicates that the new registrants are composed of younger people, over half of them falling into the 21 to 39 year old age bracket. And of great importance, 3/4 of the new registrants have pre-school, or school-age children, compared with 64 per cent for the old registrants, and 58 per cent for the general population.

TABLE 4-13

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THREE SAMPLES, BY AGE OF RESPONDENT, AND BY AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD

AGE	General Population	All Registrants	New Registrants
21 to 39	31%	27%	57%
40 to 49	30	39	25
50 and over	39	34	18
	100%	100%	100%
AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD			
Under 6 years	26%	25%	48%
6 to 18 years	32	39	27
Over 18 years	22	19	8
Inapplicable (no children)	20	17	17
Totals	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	490	160	132

The higher educational attainment of the new registrants as compared with all registrants is shown in Table 4-14. Among the new registrants, 57 per cent have attended college, compared with 41 per cent for all registered voters, and 36 per cent for the general population. Income differences are very slight, however, with the new registrants having 10 per cent more people earning $7,000 to $10,999 per year than all registered voters.

TABLE 4-14

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS IN THREE SAMPLES, BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL, AND BY INCOME

Educational Level	General Population	All Registrants	New Registrants
4 years of college or more	36%	41%	57%
Under 4 years of college	64	59	43
	100%	100%	100%
Family Income			
Under $7,000	19%	11%	8%
$7,000 to 10,999	21	22	32
$11,000 to 14,999	23	23	26
$15,000 and over	28	37	30
Not ascertained	9	7	4
Totals	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	490	160	132

In summary, the preceding three tables have shown that the sample of new registrants, in comparison with the all registrants sample and the general population sample, is composed of people who are predominantly newcomers to the Birmingham area . . . they are younger, child-rearing, and of higher educational attainment. It is pertinent to observe that the social characteristics of the new registrants are such that they should be more supportive of the public schools than the "all registrants" group, or the general population.

D. Voting Behavior of the New Registrants

Table 4-15 indicates that the new registrants are more supportive of the millage proposal which was placed on the November, 1961 ballot than are the people in the all registrants sample, or the people in the general population sample. Of the new respondents who said they voted, 82 per cent report voting affirmatively, compared with 64 per cent for the all registrants group, and 61 per cent for the general population. It is interesting to note that the issue actually carried with a 62.4 per cent yes vote, a figure not far from the one derived from the all registered voters sample. It is of further interest to observe that if the people who report they voted "no" are combined with the people who say they can't recall how they voted, the negative vote of the election is closely approximated. This phenomenon has recurred consistently throughout the survey; the "don't know" or "can't recall" responses when added to the negative statements seem to predict the actual negative vote cast.

TABLE 4-15

STATED VOTING BEHAVIOR IN THE NOVEMBER, 1961 ELECTION

Operational Proposal	General Population	All Registrants	New Registrants
Yes	61%	64%	82%
No	18	20	7
Can't recall	21	16	11
	100%	100%	100%
Building Proposal			
Yes	61%	64%	82%
No	19	20	9
Can't recall	20	16	9
Totals	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	490	160	132

Summary

The analysis of this chapter has proceeded on the basis of distinguishing contrived from natural sources of change in school support. The first part of the chapter presented data to indicate that a concerted campaign via newspapers, direct mail, and by personal contacts made by a citizens committee may well have modified some community attitudes toward the schools. For instance, a comparison of attitudes in 1961, before the campaign, and in 1962, after the campaign, reveals that in 1962 the people of the community had more confidence in the way school funds were used, and they were also more satisfied that they were being kept informed about school affairs. Although no favorable change occurred with respect to feelings about the past building program, nearly half of the people were aware of favorable changes in the new school building program. Further analysis of contrived change revealed that the 750 man citizens committee called on an estimated 7,000 people who remembered the call one year later. Most citizens who were called on were favorably impressed with the idea, although 1/5 felt the call was of little or no help.

Although the importance of contrived change is not to be denied, the preceding analysis has provided data to suggest that the natural phenomena which evolve in a community exert a far greater influence upon the school support than the contrived efforts. For instance, the concerted registration campaign drive turned up about 200 new registrants, at the most, while the events of the 1960 presidential year resulted in over ten times the total number of registrants of the 1961 registration campaign.

Of even deeper significance for school support are those natural phenomena associated with the deconcentration process. Selective migration in urban areas is producing specialized suburban populations. The migration of select types of people to Birmingham during the past five years is of such a nature as to appreciably influence the level of support for the schools. The more highly educated, home-purchasing, child rearing couples who have moved here are contributing to an increase in the level of school support in this community. This fact, however, raises another question: what happens to central city school support levels when supportive types of people move to the suburbs?

In conclusion, this analysis suggests that contrived change in school support levels is probably an important factor in maintaining or raising these levels. However, of even greater significance are natural changes in the social organization of the community which influence support levels. In fact, close attention to these natural changes could well serve as the basis for planning contrived change. In the present setting, knowledge that migration patterns were bringing many attitudinally supportive, but non-registered newcomers to the community provided the cue which activated a registration campaign. However, it must be noted that in the instance where a citizens committee is organized to activate latent voters, another problem is raised concerning contrived and natural efforts which are related to school support. While the citizens committee is ephemeral, existing for but a short period in time, there is the phenomenon of the ongoing formal association. The next chapter therefore explores the effects of formal association membership upon attitudinal support, and tendency to vote in school elections.

CHAPTER 5

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FORMAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

The problem which this chapter explores concerns the extent to which the socially active, participating members of the community differ from the more isolated, inactive members with respect to support for education. A rather common way of looking at millage failures is to assume that "the opposition" consists of organized efforts on the part of a group of citizens to defeat the millage request. While this is probably the case in some instances, there is reason to believe that a more fundamental condition underlies a low level of community support for the schools. This assumption is one which attributes a low level of support to the more isolated, the anomic segment of the population. In keeping with the theory of school support which was outlined in Chapter 1, the ensuing analysis is based upon the hypothesis that major support for the schools arises from the organized and integrated segment of the population, while disinterest and opposition is seated primarily in those people who are alienated from community affairs. Therefore, contrary to a rather common view, "the opposition" is herein viewed as a result of community anomia, rather than of community organization.

I. THE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FORMAL ASSOCIATION

Before proceeding into some explicit hypotheses it might be well to pause briefly to consider the position of the formal association in the life of the community. The relationship of the formal association to other elements of the social system has been described as follows:

> The family, the church, the business enterprise, the government agency, and the school are all irrevocably involved in the functional system of the urban society. None can function independently of the others. And in the interstices between the basic production and service units are

> numerous associations that operate to support or to modify the functions of the more basic units. These include labor unions and occupational groups of all kinds, parents and teacher associations, neighborhood protective associations, Isaac Walton Leagues, business men's luncheon clubs, and so forth indefinitely.[1]

The major significance of the formal association is most often assumed to lie in the integrative force which it exerts in the community. Warner and Lunt are quite representative of this view when they state

> The individual need only be a member of one of the many associations to be brought more or less intimately into contact with members of these organizations which cross-cut the entire community. The association thus acts as one of the foremost mechanisms of integration.[2]

While the formal association may be seen as a "foremost mechanism of integration" for the community, a corrolary fact is that the formal association has integrative significance for the individual. People whose social contacts are generally limited and who thereby lead a relatively isolated existence tend to suffer from anomie and its related effects. The value of formal association membership as an index of integration is further enhanced by the fact that people whose formal group contacts are limited also tend to have more limited informal group contacts as well.[3] Thus non-members of formal associations see and visit less frequently with friends, neighbors, co-workers, and relatives than do members. In brief, people in a community seem to be either more or less in the stream of social activity, or more or less out of it. Formal association membership serves as an index of this condition.

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1. Ronald Freedman, Amos Hawley, et. al., Principles of Sociology (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1956), p. 406.
2. W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt, The Social Life of a Modern Community (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), p. 103.
3. Morris Axelrod, "A Study of Formal and Informal Group Participation in a Large Urban Community" (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1953).

II. HYPOTHESES CONCERNING THE RELATIONSHIP OF FORMAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP TO LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THE SCHOOLS

Membership and Communication. Since formal association members are in frequent contact with other members of the community both in their formal and in their informal group associations, it is assumed that knowledge of local affairs will be of greater importance to members than to non-members. Therefore:

Hypothesis 1a Members of formal associations will subscribe to or regularly read the local newspaper more frequently than will non-members.

Hypothesis 1b Members of formal associations will be more aware than non-members of receiving direct mail (e.g. Board Briefs) which is sent by the Birmingham Public Schools to all households in the school district. Members will also tend to read this mail more than will non-members.

Membership and Attitudes Toward School Issues. In the 1961 study it was discovered that the most negative comments about the Birmingham school system centered around the building program. Acting on this negative comment, the school officials at once reviewed past building policies and introduced many modifications in the design of new buildings (e.g. less glass, fewer architectural "frills"). These changes in design were at once placed in effect in seven new construction projects, and information about these changes was carefully reported to the community via the press and by direct mail. Therefore, community opinion about the school building program was thoroughly probed in the 1962 study to determine what changes, if any, had occurred with respect to people's attitudes about the building program. Thus it is pertinent to ask in what ways, if any, members of formal associations differ from non-members with respect to their opinions about the school building program, and with respect to the recent changes which have been innovated.

One difference which might be anticipated between members and non-members with respect to attitudes toward the schools is whether or not opinions have been formulated. Being less involved in the affairs of the community, perhaps caring less about civic and school matters, it would seem reasonable to expect that the more isolated members of the community would have formed fewer opinions about school issues than non-members. Therefore

Hypothesis 2a Non-Members of formal associations will have fewer opinions about school issues than will members.

A second difference which might be anticipated between members and non-members of formal organizations concerns the nature of the opinions which are held. Being less exposed to the usual avenues of communication about school affairs one might anticipate that non-members would be open to greater misimpressions about school issues than would members. Moreover, persons who are relatively isolated are sometimes known to experience more "paranoid" and hostile opinions about the world in general than are the less alienated But of even greater pertinence for school attitudes is the fact that non-members tend to be people with less family involvement . . . fewer non-members have children enrolled in the schools than do members. Therefore

Hypothesis 2b In general, formal association members will be more favorable in their attitudes toward the school building program than will non-members.

Formal associations vary considerably in their purposes, activities, and membership. Thus differences between the various types of formal associations should occur with respect to the level of support which they reflect to the schools. Since the P.T.A. is a group composed of members whose express purpose is to promote sound school programs and procedures, members of this organization should be more supportive of the schools than non-members, and P.T.A. members should be among the most supportive of all formal association members. Therefore

Hypothesis 2c P.T.A. members will be more supportive of school policies than non-P.T.A. members, and P.T.A. members will be generally more supportive of school policies than members of other formal associations.

Formal Associations and Voting Activity. It is one thing to possess a given attitude toward the schools, another thing to express it at the polls. In addition to providing a basis of consensual validity for given attitudes, the formal group provides reinforcement for taking action with respect to one's group-shared values. In fact, promoting the value of voting and "being a good citizen", reminding members to vote, and other related activities are assuredly quite characteristic of many formal associations. Therefore

Hypothesis 3a Members of formal associations will vote in school elections more frequently than will non-members.

And moreover, since the P.T.A. is an association with direct concern for the welfare of the public schools, this organization should be expected to provide a greater impetus for its members to vote in school elections than other formal associations. Thus

Hypothesis 3b P.T.A. members will vote more frequently in school elections than non-P.T.A. members. P.T.A. members will also vote more frequently in school elections than will members of other formal associations.

III. THE FINDINGS: VARIATIONS IN SUPPORT BETWEEN MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS OF FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS

Formal Association Membership and Communication

Tables 5-1 through 5-3 reveal that not only are non-members of formal associations more isolated than members in their everyday personal contacts in the community, they are also more isolated from local news as carried by the newspapers. Even direct mail fails to reach non-members to the extent that it does members. Therefore hypotheses 1a and 1b are upheld.

A) Members of Formal Associations Read the Local Newspapers More Than Non-Members

TABLE 5-1*

MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND SUBSCRIPTION TO OR REGULAR READING OF THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER

Does the respondent subscribe to or regularly read the local newspaper ?	Non-Members	Members Number of meetings attended in an average month None	 One or Two	 Three or more
Yes	52%	63%	75%	73%
No	48	37	25	27
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	132	62	162	128

B) Members of Formal Groups are More Aware of Receiving Direct Mail from the Public Schools than are Non-Members

TABLE 5-2

MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND AWARENESS OF RECEIVING LITERATURE BY DIRECT MAIL FROM THE BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Have you received any literature by direct mail from the public schools during the past year ?"	Non-Members	Members Number of meetings attended in an average month None	 One or Two	 Three or More
Yes	61%	64%	81%	84%
No	32	26	13	11
Don't know	7	10	6	5
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. Cases	132	62	162	128

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* See Appendix A for sampling error, and Appendix B for significance of differences in this and the following tables.

C) And Members of Formal Associations Read Their Direct Mail More Than Non-Members. Moreover, Reading of Direct Mail Among Members Increases with Increased Attendance at Meetings

TABLE 5-3

MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND READING OF LITERATURE SENT BY THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"And did you have time to read any of this literature?"	Non-Members	Members Number of meetings attended in an average month None	One or Two	Three or more
Yes	42%	45%	67%	71%
No	20	18	14	13
Not applicable	38	37	19	16
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. of Cases	132	62	162	128

Formal Association Membership and Attitudes Toward the School Building Program

Tables 5-4 through 5-9 reveal two major facts. First, members of formal groups are distinguished from non-members in that members have fewer "no opinion" responses than do members. Hypothesis 2a is thereby confirmed. Moreover, "no opinion" responses among members decline with increased frequency of attendance at meetings. It is therefore apparent that membership in formal associations serves to help members formulate opinions about school matters. Secondly, there is a difference between members and non-members with respect to their attitudes toward the school building program. Members of formal groups are more supportive of the school building program than are non-members. Hypothesis 2b is therefore confirmed.

D) Formal Association Members are More Satisfied with the School Building Program of the Past Ten Years than are Non-Members

E) Also, Satisfaction Among Members Increases with Frequency of Attendance at Meetings.

TABLE 5-4

MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND IMPRESSIONS OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAM OF THE PAST TEN YEARS

Impressions of the school building program of the past ten years	Non-Members	Members Number of meetings attended in an average month None	One or Two	Three or More
Satisfied	38%	43%	48%	57%
Dissatisfied	32	36	32	29
No opinion	30	21	20	14
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. of Cases	132	62	162	128

F) Members of Formal Associations are More Satisfied Than Non-Members with the Amount of Money Which the Schools Spend on Special Facilities Such as Libraries, Gymnasiums, and Swimming Pools

TABLE 5-5

MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND ATTITUDES TOWARD MONEY SPENT ON SPECIAL FACILITIES SUCH AS LIBRARIES, GYMNASIUMS, AND POOLS

"On special facilities such as libraries, gymnasiums, and swimming pools, would you say the schools have spent"		Members Number of meetings attended in an average month		
	Non-Members	None	One or two	Three or more
Too much money	30%	27%	19%	23%
Right amount	38	45	51	48
Too little money	2	8	7	9
No opinion	30	20	23	20
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. of Cases	132	62	162	128

G) To a Greater Degree Than Non-Members, Formal Association Members Believe that Local School Funds are Used Wisely.

H) Moreover, This Belief Increases with Increased Frequency of Attendance at Meetings.

TABLE 5-6

MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND OPINIONS ABOUT HOW WELL SCHOOL FUNDS ARE USED

"Generally speaking, how would you say school funds are used?"	Non-Members	Members Number of meetings attended in an average month None	One or two	Three or more
Wisely	34%	40%	40%	56%
Wisely part of the time	10	11	11	15
Unwisely	7	2	2	2
No opinion	49	47	47	27
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. of Cases	132	62	162	128

I) Non-Members are Less Aware of New Elementary Construction of the Past Seven Months Than Are Members

TABLE 5-7

MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND AWARENESS OF NEW ELEMENTARY CONSTRUCTION DURING THE PAST SEVEN MONTHS

"Have you heard, seen or read about any of the new elementary construction of the past seven months?"	Non-Members	Members Number of meetings attended in an average month None	 One or two	 Three or more
Yes, is aware of it	51%	63%	67%	66%
No, is not aware of it	49	37	33	34
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. of Cases	132	62	162	128

J) And Non-Members Are Less Satisfied with the New Construction Than Are the Members.

K) Also, Satisfaction Among Members Increases With Frequency of Attendance at Meetings

TABLE 5-8

MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND OPINIONS ABOUT THE NEW ELEMENTARY BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED IN THE PAST SEVEN MONTHS

"What are your impressions of these new elementary constructions of the past seven months ?"	Non-Members	Members Number of meetings attended in the average month None	 One or two	 Three or more
Satisfied	24%	31%	35%	44%
Dissatisfied	10	11	10	10
Not applicable	66	58	55	46
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. of Cases	132	62	162	128

L) People Who Belong to Formal Associations Are More Likely Than Non-Members to Agree That There Have Been Improvements In the School Building Policies of the Past Year.

TABLE 5-9

MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND IMPRESSIONS OF IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAM OF THE PAST TWO YEARS

"During the past year or two have the school building policies in Birmingham"	Non-Members	Members Number of meetings attended in an average month None	One or two	Three or more
Improved	34%	45%	41%	55%
Remained the same	10	8	13	12
Degenerated	8	3	6	4
No Opinion	48	44	40	29
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. of Cases	132	62	162	128

Formal Association Membership and Stated Voting Support

Tables 5-10 and 5-11 make it amply clear that formal association membership is an important factor in providing community support for the public schools. Members are more supportive than non-members on both the building proposal and the operational request, which appeared on the November ballot. Moreover, among members, support increases for both of these issues with number of meetings attended in an average month. Therefore, level of support for the public schools is seen to bear a direct relationship to degree of activity in formal associations.

M) The Greater the Degree of Activity in Formal Associations, the Greater the Support for the School Building Proposal

TABLE 5-10

MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND VOTE CAST FOR THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAM

"On the proposition to grant authority to finance the school building program did you vote. . ."	Non-Members	Members Number of meetings attended in an average month None	 One or two	 Three or more
Yes	19%	26%	41%	47%
No	12	13	9	11
Can't recall	9	18	12	10
Didn't vote	60	43	38	32
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. of Cases	132	62	162	128

N) The Greater the Degree of Activity in Formal Associations, the Greater the Support for the Operational Request

TABLE 5-11

MEMBERSHIP AND ACTIVITY IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND VOTE CAST FOR THE OPERATING MILLAGE

"In last November's school election, how did you vote on the operational request?"	Non-Members	Members Number of meetings attended in an average month None	 One or two	 Three or more
Yes	18%	24%	43%	45%
No	11	15	9	9
Can't recall	11	16	10	13
Didn't vote	60	45	38	33
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%
No. of cases	132	62	162	128

IV. TYPES OF FORMAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP AND VARIATIONS IN SUPPORT FACTORS

The preceding analysis has shown that formal association membership in Birmingham is a factor which is positively associated with support for the schools. The significance of this relationship is further strengthened by the fact that degree of support among members tends to increase with frequency of attendance at meetings. However, this analysis is gross and indicates nothing about differences in support which may exist between the various types of formal associations. Therefore the following analysis considers variations in support which exist between such types of formal association membership as P.T.A., social or card clubs, neighborhood organizations, welfare and charitable associations, church-connected groups, fraternal lodges and auxiliaries, and community centers. The relationship of membership in these various groups is considered with respect to communication, attitudes toward the school building program, and voting behavior.

Types of Formal Association Membership and Communication

Tables 5-12 through 5-14 show that variations occur between types of formal association membership and response to two types of mass communications. For instance, members of church-connected groups are strongly distinguished from non-church connected people in local newspaper readership, while members of fraternal lodges differ least from their non-members. With respect to being aware of receiving literature by direct mail from the public schools, P.T.A. members are most distinguished from their non-members, while community center members do not differ significantly from their non-members. Also, P.T.A. members read their direct mail to a greater extent than any other type of group member, whereas people who belong to fraternal lodges or community centers do not differ from non-members in the reading of such literature.

TABLE 5-12

MEMBERSHIP IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND SUBSCRIPTION TO THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER

Formal Associations	"What newspapers do you subscribe to or regularly read"			
	Subscribes to or reads local paper	Does not read the local paper	Totals	No. of Cases
(1) *Member P.T.A.	73%	27	100%	156
Non-Member	63	37		307
(2) Member Social or Card Club	72	28	100	172
Non-Member	63	37	100	317
(5) Member Neighborhood Organiz'n	73	27	100	79
Non-Member	65	35	100	410
(6) *Member Charitable Organiz'n	75	25	100	51
Non-Member	65	35	100	438
(4) *Member Church-Connected Groups	78	22	100	174
Non-Member	60	40	100	315
(7) Member Fraternal Lodge	71	29	100	79
Non-Member	65	35	100	410
(3) *Member Community Center	80	20	100	56
Non-Member	64	36	100	433

TABLE 5-13

MEMBERSHIP IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND RECOLLECTION OF HAVING RECEIVED DIRECT MAIL FROM THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS DURING THE PAST YEAR

	"Have you received any literature by direct mail from the Birmingham Public Schools during the past year"				
	Yes, have received mail	No, haven't received mail	Don't Know	Totals	No. of cases
(1) *Member of P.T.A.	91%	7%	2%	100%	156
Non-Member	66	26	8	100	307
(2) Member of Social or Card club	79	13	8	100	172
Non-Member	72	22	6	100	317
(5) *Member Neighborhood organiz'n	83	9	8	100	66
Non-Member	73	21	6	100	423
(6) *Member Charitable Organiz'n	86	8	6	100	51
Non-Member	73	20	7	100	438
(4) Member Church-Connected Group	80	14	6	100	174
Member Fraternal Lodge	71	22	7	100	315
(7) *Member Fraternal Lodge	86	8	6	100	79
Non-Member	72	21	7	100	410
(3) Member Community Center	79	16	5	100	56
Non-Member	74	19	7	100	433

TABLE 5-14

MEMBERSHIP IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND READING OF LITERATURE SENT BY DIRECT MAIL BY THE BIRMINGHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Formal Associations	"And did you have time to read the literature sent by the Birmingham Public Schools?"				
	Yes	No	Not Applicable[1]	Totals	No. of Cases
(1) *Member P.T.A.	81%	10%	9%	100	156
Non-Member	47	19	34	100	307
(2) *Member Social or Card Club	66	14	20	100	172
Non-Member	55	17	28	100	317
(5) *Member Neighborhood Organizat'n	74	8	18	100	66
Non-Member	56	17	27	100	423
(5) *Member Charitable Organizat'n	78	8	14	100	51
Non-Member	56	17	27	100	438
(4) *Member Church-Connected Group	68	10	22	100	174
Non-Member	53	19	28	100	315
(7) Member Fraternal Lodge	63	20	17	100	79
Non-Member	58	15	27	100	410
(3) Member Community Center	63	16	21	100	56
Non-Member	58	16	26	100	433

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1. Respondent does not recall having received any literature from the schools.

Types of Formal Association Membership and Attitudes Toward the Building Program

The most basic fact present in Tables 5-15 to 5-20 is that P.T.A. members are far stronger in their attitudinal support for the school building program than are members of any other group. In every question analyzed, P.T.A. members differed appreciably in support from non-members, and were also more supportive than members of other organizations for each of these questions as well. Hypothesis 2-c is therefore borne out.

In contrast to the P.T.A. members, those people who belong to fraternal lodges or auxiliaries do not, for the most part, differ significantly from the rest of the population. One exception to this behavior occurs with respect to opinions concerning the amount of money which is spent on special facilities such as libraries, gymnasiums, and swimming pools. Response to this question reveals that members of fraternal lodges, to a greater degree than their non-members, believe that too much money is spent on these special facilities.

Another factor of interest to emerge from the ensuing set of tables is the behavior of people who belong to card clubs or social groups. Although "running a poor second" to the P.T.A. with respect to supportive attitudes, members of card clubs differ from their non-members to a greater degree than any other type of formal association member, except the P.T.A. group. In contrast again are the charitable and welfare organizations whose members do not tend to differ significantly with respect to supportive school attitudes.

A last observation of some pertinence is the fact that in no instance do the members of any type of formal association display attitudes which are more negative toward these school issues than those held by the general population. This fact alone supports the thesis that in Birmingham, at least, opposition to the schools is not an "organized" phenomenon.

TABLE 5-15

MEMBERSHIP IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAM OF THE PAST TEN YEARS

Formal Associations	"Impressions of the school building program of the past ten years"				
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	No Opinion	Totals	No. Cases
(1) *Member P.T.A.	63%	27%	10%	100%	156
Non-Member	39	34	27	100%	307
(2) Member Social or Card Club	52	29	19	100%	172
Non-Member	44	33	23	100%	317
(5) *Member Neighborhood Organ'n	56	29	15	100%	66
Non-Member	45	32	23	100%	423
(6) *Member Charitable Organizat'n	43	43	14	100%	51
Non-Member	47	30	23	100%	438
(4) Member Church-Connected Group	49	31	22	100%	174
Non-Member	46	32	22	100%	315
(7) Member Fraternal Lodge	48	34	18	100%	79
Non-Member	47	31	22	100%	410
(3) Member Community Center	50	34	16	100%	56
Non-Member	47	31	22	100%	433

*Designates those groups whose members differ significantly from non-members in their attitudes toward the school building program of the past ten years.

TABLE 5-16

MEMBERSHIP IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND IMPRESSIONS OF AMOUNT OF MONEY SPENT ON SPECIAL FACILITIES AS LIBRARIES, GYMNASIUMS, AND POOLS

	"Do you feel the public schools have spent too much, too little, or the right amount on special facilities such as libraries, gymnasiums, swimming pools, and so forth?"					
	Too Much	Right Amount	Too Little	No Opinion	Totals	No. of Cases
(1) *Member P.T.A.	21%	58%	10%	11	100%	156
Non-Member	24	41	5	30	100	307
(2) *Member Social or Card Club	16	52	9	23	100	172
Non-Member	28	43	5	24	100	317
(5) Member Neighborhood Organiz'n	24	50	6	20	100	66
Non-Member	24	45	6	25	100	423
(6) Member Charitable Organizat'n	22	53	10	15	100	51
Non-Member	24	45	6	25	100	438
(4) Member Church-Connected Group	19	48	8	25	100	174
Non-Member	27	45	5	23	100	315
(7) Member Fraternal Lodge	32	43	6	19	100	79
Non-Member	23	46	6	25	100	410
(3) Member Community Center	20	41	6	32	100	56
Non-Member	25	46	7	23	100	433

TABLE 5-17

MEMBERSHIP IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS OF HOW WELL THE LOCAL SCHOOL FUNDS ARE USED

Formal Associations	"Generally speaking, how would you say local school funds are used?"					
	Wisely	Wisely part of the time	Unwisely	No Opinion	Totals	No. Cases
(1) *Member P.T.A.	67%	17%	2%	16%	100%	156
Non-Member	38	10	4	48	100	307
(2) Member Social or Card Clubs	52	16	1	31	100	172
Non-Member	45	11	5	39	100	315
(5) Member Charitable Organizat'n	51	22	2	25	100	51
Non-Member	46	12	4	38	100	438
(6) Member Neighborhood Organiz'n	52	17	4	27	100	66
Non-Member	46	12	3	39	100	423
(4) *Member Church-Connected Group	56	12	2	30	100	174
Non-Member	42	13	4	41	100	315
(7) Member Fraternal Lodge	52	9	4	35	100	79
Non-Member	46	14	3	37	100	410
(3) Member Community Center	46	11	2	41	100	56
Non-Member	47	13	4	36	100	433

TABLE 5-18

MEMBERSHIP IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS BY AWARENESS OF NEW ELEMENTARY CONSTRUCTION OF THE PAST SEVEN MONTHS

Formal Associations	"Have you seen, heard, or read about any new elementary construction during the past seven months?"			
	Aware of New Construction	Not aware of new construction	Totals	No. Cases
(1) *Member P.T.A.	76%	24	100%	156
Non-Member	56	44	100%	307
(2) *Member Social or Card Club	70	30	100%	172
Non-Member	58	42	100%	317
(5) *Member Neighborhood Organizat'n	77	23	100%	66
Non-Member	60	40	100%	423
(6) *Member Charitable Organizat'n	72	28	100%	51
Non-Member	61	39	100%	438
(4) Member Church-Connected Group	61	39	100%	174
Non-Member	63	37	100%	315
(7) Member Fraternal Lodge	62	38	100%	79
Non-Member	62	38	100%	410
(3) Member Community Center	57	43	100%	56
Non-Member	63	37	100%	438

TABLE 5-19

MEMBERSHIP IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NEW ELEMENTARY BUILDINGS CONSTRUCTED IN THE PAST SEVEN MONTHS

Formal Associations	"What are your impressions of the new elementary construction?"				
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	No Opinion	Totals	No. Cases
(1) *Member P.T.A.	53%	8%	39%	100%	156
Non-Member	25	11	64	100%	307
(2) *Member Social or Card Club	41	8	51	100%	172
Non-Member	30	11	59	100%	317
(5) *Member Neighborhood Organization	50	14	36	100%	66
Non-Member	31	10	59	100%	423
(6) Member Charitable Organization	34	16	47	100%	51
Non-Member	33	10	57	100%	438
(4) Member Church-Connected Group	33	9	58	100%	174
Non-Member	34	11	55	100%	315
(7) *Member Fraternal Lodge	43	9	48	100%	79
Non-Member	32	11	57	100%	423
(3) Member Community Center	36	3	61	100%	56
Non-Member	34	11	55	100%	438

TABLE 5-20

MEMBERSHIP IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS AND FEELINGS ABOUT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAM DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS

Formal Associations	"During the past two years, building policies have"					
	Improved	Remained the Same	Degenerated	No Opinion	Totals	No. Cases
(1) *Member P.T.A.	55%	15%	3%	27%	100%	156
Non-Member	37	9	8	46	100	307
(2) *Member Social or Card Club	50	12	4	34	100	172
Non-Member	39	11	6	41	100	315
(5) Member Neighborhood Organizat'n	47	14	12	27	100	66
Non-Member	42	11	5	42	100	423
(6) Member Charitable Organizat'n	47	18	8	27	100	56
Non-Member	42	11	6	41	100	438
(4) Member Church-Connected Group	44	12	7	37	100	174
Non-Member	42	11	6	41	100	315
(7) Member Fraternal Lodge	44	12	6	38	100	79
Non-Member	43	11	6	40	100	423
(3) Member Community Center	43	14	9	34	100	51
Non-Member	43	11	6	40	100	438

Types of Formal Association Membership and Voting Behavior

Tables 5-21 and 5-22 again reflect variations in attitudes toward the school by type of formal association membership. P.T.A. members are distinguished from non-members in voting affirmatively on both the operational and the school building issue to a greater extent than is true of any other type of formal group member. Members of fraternal lodges and auxiliaries, and community center members differed least in this respect, their members behaving no differently than non-members.

In addition to the strong support offered by P.T.A. members, these tables again reveal that in no instance do members of any formal association differ from non-members by indicating a significantly lower level of support for the schools. As in the previous set of tables, it may therefore be concluded that no evidence exists to indicate that any major opposition to the public schools is rooted in the formal associations of the community.

TABLE 5-21

MEMBERSHIP IN FORMAL ASSOCIATION, BY SUPPORT FOR OPERATING MILLAGE

Formal Associations	"With respect to the operating millage on the November ballot, did you vote?"					
	Yes	No	Can't recall	Not Applicable	Totals	No. of Cases
(1) *Member P.T.A.	56%	6%	9%	29%	100%	156
Non-Member	23	13	13	51	100	307
(2) *Member Social or Card Club	45	7	10	38	100	172
Non-Member	28	12	12	48	100	317
(5) *Member Neighborhood Organizat'n	47	15	8	30	100	66
Non-Member	32	10	12	46	100	423
(6) *Member Charitable Organizat'n	53	14	8	25	100	51
Non-Member	32	10	12	46	100	438
(4) *Member Church-Connected Group	46	8	12	34	100	174
Non-Member	27	12	11	50	100	315
(7) Member Fraternal Lodge	32	13	16	39	100	79
Non-Member	34	10	11	45	100	410
(3) Member Community Center	41	7	13	39	100	56
Non-Member	33	11	11	45	100	433

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1. Respondent previously indicated that he (she) did not vote in this election.

TABLE 5-22

MEMBERSHIP IN FORMAL ASSOCIATIONS, BY SUPPORT FOR BUILDING PROPOSAL

Formal Associations	"On the proposition granting authority to finance the school building program, did you vote . . . "					
	Yes	No	Can't recall	Not Applicable	Totals	No. of Cases
(1) *Member P.T.A.	57%	7%	8%	29%	100%	156
Non-Member	23	13	13	51	100	307
(2) *Member Social or Card Club	44	8	11	37	100	172
Non-Member	29	12	11	48	100	317
(5) *Member Neighborhood Organiz'n	49	12	9	30	100	66
Non-Member	32	11	11	46	100	423
(6) *Member Charitable Organizat'n	49	14	12	25	100	51
Non-Member	32	11	11	46	100	438
(4) *Member Church-Connected Group	46	10	11	33	100	174
Non-Member	28	11	11	50	100	315
(7) Member Fraternal Lodge	32	14	17	38	100	79
Non-Member	35	10	10	45	100	423
(3) Member Community Center	36	11	14	39	100	56
Non-Member	34	11	11	44	100	433

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1. Respondent previously indicated that he did not vote in the November election.

V. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION, CHILD ENROLLMENT, AND SCHOOL SUPPORT

Religious affiliation and membership in labor unions are usually accorded separate treatment from other types of formal association membership by sociologists. This is due to the fact that both constitute a slightly different order of formal group affiliation, and the behavior of these two categories is often quite different from the behavior displayed by other types of formal associations. In the present study there is little point in pursuing an analysis of union membership because there are not enough union members in the sample to provide a sound analysis.

The following examination of religious affiliation and school support is somewhat limited in scope due to the fact that there are not enough cases in the sample to permit the application of a series of control procedures. The importance of control procedures is attested to in the following analysis, for among the controls which were applied, the factor of child enrollment provides meaning to differences in support which occur between Catholic and Protestant affiliators.

The implications of religious affiliation for school support may be quite succinctly summarized: Protestant affiliators are more supportive of the schools than are Catholic affiliators because Catholics respond to school issues in the same manner as do other people in the community who do not have children enrolled in the public schools. Therefore, the significance of religious affiliation for school support ultimately rests upon the factor of child enrollment in the public schools.

Tables 5-23 through 5-25 are derived from the 1961 survey. Table 5-23 shows that Protestant affiliators are attitudinally more supportive of millage proposals than are Catholic affiliators. Table 5-24 reveals there is no significant difference between Protestant and Catholic affiliators with respect to actual voting frequency.

TABLE 5-23

INDEX OF MILLAGE SUPPORT, BY RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE

Religious Preference	Attitudes Toward Millage Proposals				
	Supportive	Ambivalent	Rejective	Totals	Number Cases
Protestant	48%	28%	24%	100%	327
Catholic	35	39	26	100	94
Other	71	25	4	100	24

TABLE 5-24

VOTING ACTIVITY, BY RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE

Religious Preference	In the last two school elections, respondent has actually voted in:			
	One or both	Neither	Totals	Number Cases
Protestant	44%	56%	100%	123
Catholic	41	59	100	39

It should be noted in the preceding Table 5-23 that the number of cases in the "other" religious affiliation category is too small to permit the drawing of any conclusions. This category was included, since it suggests that it might be interesting to learn more about the response of Jewish affiliators to school support, as well as knowing how non-religious affiliators respond. In a similar fashion, the number of cases in the "Catholic" category in Table 5-24 is too small to provide strong assurance as to the meaning of the percentages provided in that row. However, the main finding that Protestant affiliators do not differ significantly from Catholic affiliators with respect to voting frequencies is upheld in data gathered in the 1962 survey.

The major finding of this analysis is that the position of the Catholic affiliator, vis a vis public school support, is similar to the position of other members of the community who do not have children enrolled in the public schools. Table 5-25 provides a comparison of all Catholic affiliators in the community with persons who do and do not have children under 18 years of age. The similarity of behavior of Catholic affiliators and the no children groups on the Index of Millage Support is very pronounced.

TABLE 5-25

INDEX OF MILLAGE SUPPORT, FOR CATHOLIC AFFILIATORS, AND FOR RESPONDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT CHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE

	Attitudes Toward Millage Proposals				Number
	Supportive	Ambivalent	Rejective	Totals	Cases
Catholic affiliators	35%	39%	26%	100%	94
People with no children under 18 years of age	35	36	30	100	183
People with children under 18 years of age	55	27	18	100	262

In view of the fact that Table 5-25 indicates that people with no pre-school, or school age children respond to millage proposals in a similar manner to Catholic affiliators, the factor of school enrollment would seem to warrant further attention. Tables 5-26 and 5-27 provide information concerning the significance of enrollment. Both of these tables are based upon data gathered in the 1962 survey, and both reveal the important bearing which child enrollments have upon attitudinal support for the schools and for voting activity in school elections.

Table 5-26 is notable in that it shows that people who have children enrolled in public schools report themselves as having been twice as supportive at the last millage election as those people who do not have children enrolled in the public schools.

TABLE 5-26

CHILD ENROLLMENT AND STATED VOTING RESPONSE TO THE OPERATIONAL MILLAGE PROPOSAL IN THE NOVEMBER, 1961 SCHOOL ELECTION

One or more child enrolled in:	"On the operating millage proposal, did you vote:"			
	Yes	No	Can't Recall	Totals
Public school	80%	9%	11%	100%
Parochial or private school	42	27	31	100
No children under 18 years of age	40	30	30	100
Number of cases	167	51	56	274

Among those people who said they voted in the November 1961 millage election, parents of public school children also report themselves as having been more supportive of the building proposal than non-public school parents. This finding is borne out in Table 5-27.

TABLE 5-27

CHILD ENROLLMENT AND STATED VOTING RESPONSE TO THE BOND PROPOSITION IN THE NOVEMBER, 1961 SCHOOL ELECTION

One or more child enrolled in	"And on the bond proposition granting authority to finance the school building program, did you vote:"			
	Yes	No	Can't Recall	Totals
Public school	79%	8%	13%	100%
Parochial or private school	50	23	27	100
No children under 18 years of age	41	33	23	100
Number of cases	167	55	53	274

SUMMARY

The major finding of this chapter concerns the positive relationship which exists between formal association membership and school support. In Birmingham, the greater the participation in community affairs through membership in formal associations, the greater the support accorded the public schools. This finding upholds a major premise advanced in Chapter 1. While admitting that opposition to the schools may arise from organized segments of the community, a more insidious and chronic form of school opposition was assumed to lie in the anomic segment of the community. In brief, it was predicated that school support would most often tend to be associated with the organized portion of the community, while disinterest and opposition would most often tend to be associated with the anomic portion. The preceding analysis has borne out this assumption.

A second finding of importance concerns the role of the P.T.A. as a source of group support for the schools. Among the various types of formal associations, the P.T.A. is by far the strongest source of organization support. Not only are P.T.A. members attitudinally more supportive than other kinds of group affiliators . . . P.T.A. members tend to vote. These findings concerning the importance of the parent-teacher group suggest an observation quoted a few years ago by Morris Janowitz to the effect that "Children are not only the best neighbors in the community but they lead their parents to neighborhood community participation and orientation".[4] In the present instance, that participation and orientation heightens support for the schools.

The analysis of various types of formal associations also revealed that in no instance did members of any type of formal association prove to be less supportive of the schools than non-members. This finding lends further weight to the observation that in Birmingham, disinterest and opposition to the schools does not arise from the organized segment of the community.

A brief treatment of religious affiliation revealed that Protestants are more supportive of the schools than are Roman Catholics. It was simultaneously observed that the Catholic affiliators responded similarly to school issues with those people in the community who had no school age children. Thus the factor of child enrollment, more than the factor of religious affiliation per se, accounted for major differences in school support. For instance, among those people who said they voted in the last millage election, persons with children enrolled in the public schools were twice as supportive of the operational proposal as were either those people who had children enrolled in non-public schools, or as those who had no children of school age.

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[4] Morris Janowitz, The Community Press in an Urban Setting, (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1952), p. 124.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The strength and vigor of the American system of public school education still hinges upon one crucial factor: continuing support from the local community. In this era of vast change in the structure and organization of American communities information concerning those community forces which are associated with school support is necessary. What facets of social change will increase the level of support; what facets will depress it? To make such predictions it is essential to first arrive at a theory of school support, and to have available a related body of empirical data ordered to the theory.

It is for this reason that this report has attempted a simple theory of school support. This theory is outlined in Chapter 1, and is followed by data in Chapters 2, 4, and 5 which are ordered to the conceptual framework. A brief summary of the theory, together with a review of the findings follows, along with some conclusions drawn from the experiences gained in the conduct of this study.

I. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

A. A THEORY OF SCHOOL SUPPORT

Logically, an adequate conceptualization of school support should be composed of two major parts: first, a researchable definition of support; secondly, a description of those factors which are related to support.

School support is conceived to exist with respect to specific issues, at a given level, and at a given point in time. Mensuratively, level of support may be pursued in a latent form, via attitudes. It may also be pursued in a manifest form, as in overt acts such as voting.

Factors associated with level of support are seen as being locked in the social organizational patterns of the community. The attitudes and values which people harbor toward education do not exist in-vacuuo, they are anchored in the social norms of community groups. More specifically, the kinds of people who live in the community, and the interaction patterns which they evolve are both fundamentally linked with school support. Thus the structural properties of the community as well as group interaction phenomena are relevant areas of analysis.

Social structural properties of the community are seen to reflect needs. The major significance of population characteristics lies in the fact that they provide a gross indication of the kinds of roles which people play, and thereby indicate something of the needs which people experience as they play these roles. For instance, family life cycle stage provides an indication of the proportion of people who are playing the child-rearing role . . . an obvious clue to the need for schools on the part of these people. In contrast, a population with a high proportion of persons in older age brackets with no children under 18 years of age provides information about a large segment of the population playing a kind of role which involves little need for schools. The social characteristics of the population constitute useful data in comprehending factors associated with present school support, and in anticipating future changes in level of support.

Interaction patterns of the community, as reflected in formal association membership provide another aspect of social organization which is associated with school support. While the social structural properties of the community determine the range . . . set the potential limits for school support . . . the point upon this range where the actual support level falls in millage elections is at least partially determined by the ongoing group activities of the community. It is not enough to know what kinds of population characteristics give rise to what sorts of needs; we must also know the extent to which people are organized to the end of taking collective action to fulfill needs. Thus, two major segments of the community are postulated as having differential influence upon level of support: a non-active, or anomic segment, and an active, or integrated segment.

Since membership in formal associations also predicts interaction in informal settings as well, those people who are active in formal associations may be viewed as constituting an integrated segment of the community. Contrariwise, people who are not associated with formal groups may be postulated as constituting an anomic portion of the community.

Opposition from the integrated segment of the community harbors possibilities quite different from opposition which stems from the anomic segment. With the integrated group, a more open discussion of the issues, exchange of information and views, and a consensual validity arising from such discussion should be typical. This open communication stands to elicit response from school officials, thereby making adjustments possible. On the other hand, since the anomic segment lies outside the mainstream of community interaction and communication, the nature and extent of this opposition should be more difficult to detect, hence more difficult to make adjustments to, or to inform of adjustments even when they are made. Opposition from this source should therefore exist in a more chronic and hidden form. Moreover, since the consensus which the group-oriented members of the community experience is also a factor which stimulates expression of values at the polls, the integrated segment of the community should be expected to vote more frequently than the anomic segment.

In brief, it is assumed that in most instances, support for the schools will tend to emanate from the integrated segment of the community, while disinterest and opposition is more characteristic of the anomic segment.

B. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

This study has advanced the fundamental proposition that set amounts of support for given kinds of school programs exists in the population base of the community. Thus the social characteristics of the people who reside in the school district set the limits of available support. This assumption has been supported through an analysis of several different population characteristics presented in Chapter 2.

School support was measured in two forms in the 1961 study. People's attitudes toward millage proposals were probed, along with a determination of actual voting activity. A sample of all adult residents in the school district provided information about community attitudes toward the schools and toward two kinds of millage proposals. Another sample, drawn from voter registration files provided added information relative to actual voting activity. Thus the relationship between attitudes toward millage proposals for various population characteristics was compared with voting activity for the same set of population characteristics. The results of this analysis provide the following information.

1. Length of residence in the community

   Attitudinal support for millage issues declines with length of residence in the community, while voting activity increases.

2. Child-involvement

   Three categories of child-involvement in the schools were tested: a) potential involvement; e.g. people whose youngest child is of pre-school age. b) actual involvement; e.g. people whose youngest child is of school age. c) non-involvement; e.g. people who have no children under 18 years of age. The results are as follows:

   a. Potential involvement is associated with very high attitudinal support, but low voting activity.
   b. Actual involvement is associated with high attitudinal support, and with high voting activity.
   c. Non-involvement is associated with comparatively low attitudinal support, and comparatively low voting activity.

3. Home Ownership

   Renters are attitudinally more supportive of school millage proposals than home owners; but renters are much lower in voting activity than are home owners.

4. Sex

   There are only slight attitudinal differences toward millage proposals between men and women; but women tend to vote in school elections more frequently than men.

5. Educational level

   People with a college education are more supportive attitudinally than people without college degrees. Moreover, the college educated people are more active at the polls.

6. Occupation

   Technical, professional, and kindred occupational categories are comparatively high in attitudinal support, while people not in the labor force and housewives are comparatively low in attitudinal support. Managers, officials and proprietors display the least voting activity of the various occupational groups, while housewives show the greatest voting activity.

By combining information about attitudes toward millage issues with voting activity, four categories of people are identified:

1. Relatively supportive attitudes, and relatively active at the polls:
   a) people who have attended college
   b) people with children of school age
   c) people who are active in formal associations (especially P.T.A. members)
2. Relatively supportive attitudes, and relatively inactive at the polls
   a) new residents in the community
   b) people with pre-school age children
   c) renters
3. Relatively non-supportive attitudes, and relatively active at the polls
   a) old residents (people who have lived in the community over 15 years)
   b) people not in the labor force; housewives

4. Relatively non-supportive attitudes, and relatively inactive at the polls
    - a) people who have not attended college
    - b) people with no children under 18 years of age

From the above analysis, it may be observed that the kinds of people who actually help carry a millage election in this community are those persons listed in category #1. Those who could help carry an election, but don't, are those in category #2. Those who depress millage support are the types in category #3, while those who could help depress it, but don't are in category #4.

C. THE USE OF SURVEY RESEARCH DATA IN EDUCATION

Although the armed services, governmental agencies, business, and industry have acquired considerable experience in the utilization of survey research data, this experience is not as yet equally shared by administrators in the educational setting. However, there seems little doubt that an application of survey findings to a wide range of school problems can do a great deal to increase the efficiency and further democratize the school operation. The application of survey findings by the Birmingham School system has been described in Chapter 3. The following points seem worthy of emphasis.

1. Communication between school policy makers and the people of the community should be a two-way channel.

Most schools devote considerable time and money in communicating to the people in the community. The ensuing examples should make clear the value of receiving representative information from the people, as a means of clearing up misinformation, reducing tensions, and orienting school programs.

2. Establishing the Millage Proposal

There is good reason to believe that many millage failures are created at the moment when a particular kind of issue is formulated. In the 1961 survey it was discovered that a building issue would run into difficulty, whereas an operational request would receive comfortable support. The operational issue was placed on the ballot, and it received the comfortable support predicted. In brief, the people in the community had expressed the desire for a quality educational program; they wished to retain and hire good teachers, reduce teacher-pupil ratios, provide special services for children, give special attention to students of outstanding ability, and so forth. The operational issue which was placed on the ballot was a response to the people's request for a particular type of program.

3. Conducting the Millage Campaign

Data from the 1961 survey disclosed that strong attitudinal support existed in certain segments of the community where voting activity was low. Thus efforts were made, via the press, by newsletter, and through personal contact by a 750 man citizens committee, to encourage people to register and vote in the forthcoming election. Particular attention was given to people with those characteristics which had been shown to be associated with a low tendency to vote: newcomers to the community, people with pre-school age children, officials, managers, proprietors, and people who are renting. An evaluation of some of these efforts was made in the 1962 follow-up survey.

4. Points of Conflict and Tension May be Detected and Analyzed

The 1961 survey disclosed that 2/5 of the citizens in Birmingham felt that value had not been received for money spent in the past building program. A committee was formed to review building policies, and changes were made in the projected design of new buildings. These changes in policy, and in actual construction were communicated back to the public via the local newspaper, and by newsletter.

The 1961 survey also disclosed that only 2/5 of the people felt that school funds were used wisely. As a result of this finding, an "open door" informational policy was effected. Information was provided through the local newspaper, and by newsletters concerning details of school expenditures, investments, and general use of school funds.

The follow up study of 1962 disclosed considerable gain in community confidence with respect to the new building policies, and with respect to satisfaction with the way school funds are used.

5. Curriculum Development

The community reflected its social characteristics by requesting a superior type of educational program, and by stressing the importance of this over the physical plant. For instance, 4/5 of the people favored a foreign language program for elementary students. As a result, a new language program for elementary grades has been established. Special attention to gifted children was another request, and a new honors program is now under way. Overwhelming approval of special services was also voiced by the people. However, it was also found that the public was very unaware of the extent to which such special services were already available. As a result of this finding, the local newspaper ran an excellent series of articles on the special services which the schools are offering.

D. CONTRIVED AND NATURAL CHANGES IN LEVEL OF SUPPORT

The findings of the 1961 study led to an action campaign to improve the community-school relationship and, hopefully, to increase the level of school support. These efforts focus attention upon a basic problem in school public relations. To what extent can various efforts on the part of school personnel and interested citizens influence the level of support for the schools? Such efforts are herein referred to as "contrived", since they constitute directed efforts to improve community attitudes, and to activate voters. In contrast to contrived change, another type of influence deserves identification and investigation. Changes in school support may also be brought about by "natural" phenomena such as major political events, economic changes, or modifications in the social composition and organization of the community.

The first part of Chapter 4 explores the significance of contrived change in school support. Did the campaign via the newspaper, direct mail, and by personal contacts modify citizen attitudes toward the schools, or activate voters? There is some evidence to suggest that it perhaps did. For instance, a comparison of attitudes in 1961 (before the campaign) with similar attitudes in 1962 (after the campaign) reveals changes in attitudes. In 1962, 43 per cent of the people were aware of favorable changes in the new building program, and a distinct improvement in community attitudes toward the use of school funds was observable. In addition, 8 per cent of the people who had recently registered to vote said they had been reminded to do so by a member of a citizens committee, and an equal proportion said the newspaper had reminded them to register.

Although the importance of contrived change is not to be denied or overlooked, there is evidence to indicate that such change is small in comparison with natural change.

Of particular significance for school support is the natural change which occurs as urban populations undergo deconcentration, and as selective migration to the suburban areas occurs. Analysis reveals that in the Detroit Metropolitan Area, migration to the suburbs involves an over-representation of young married child-rearing couples of higher educational and income levels. This migration of select types of people to the Birmingham area during the past five years is of such a nature as to appreciably raise the level of support for the schools in this suburban community. The details of this phenomenon are reported in the latter part of Chapter 4.

E. SOCIAL ACTIVITY AND SCHOOL SUPPORT

Chapter 5 identifies two major segments of the Birmingham community: a socially active, group-affiliating segment, and a socially inactive, non-group affiliating segment. Support for the schools is herein found to bear a direct relationship to the extent of formal association activities. Participation in formal groups--especially the P.T.A.--is related to positive attitudes toward the schools, and to voting in school elections. Non-participation in formal associations is related to disinterest in the schools and with less inclination to vote in school elections.

In brief, people who affiliate with formal groups, to a greater extent than non-affiliators, are:

1) in greater communication with other members of the community through formal and informal contacts
2) in closer touch with mass media; i.e. newspapers and direct mail
3) are attitudinally more supportive of the schools, and
4) are more likely to vote, and vote affirmatively, in school elections.

While it is recognized that opposition to the schools may well stem from the organized segment of the community in some school districts, such is not the case in Birmingham. Moreover, organized opposition should prove to be of quite a different character than anomic opposition, since the latter entails a non-interacting, non-communicating situation. Thus a basic question arising from this analysis concerns how one communicates, in public relations programs, with a segment of the community which exists outside the mainstream of local activities and communication?

II. CONCLUSIONS

This study has verified the basic premise that support for the public schools is anchored in the social organization of the community. Support levels have been found to vary with population characteristics, and with interaction patterns as reflected in formal group activity.

The significance of these findings is increased by the fact that the social organization of American communities is undergoing considerable change. To adapt to change in such a manner as to procure necessary support is a challenge to the educational administrator. We live at a time when a sound philosophy of education is not enough. Today it takes facts and knowledge of the significant facets of social change to permit the execution of a sound philosophy of education.

The data in this study have provided the opportunity for considerable speculation and comment. However, at this point it is more than likely that the reader has arrived at many conclusions of his own. The final observations to be offered therefore center around three examples of the manner in which social organization and change pose problems with implications for future school support.

Finding: Child enrollment, or anticipated enrollment in the public schools is associated with school support.

Question: What will happen to future support levels throughout the nation as the population ages, and as the proportion of people with no children of school age increases . . . and, as the proportion of families with children enrolled in non-public schools increases?

Finding: The phenomenon of urban deconcentration is associated with the migration of young child-rearing couples of higher educational and income levels to suburban areas. These are the very social characteristics which are associated with school support.

Question: In the past, the problem of educational inequalities has been approached primarily on a national regional basis. Has the deconcentration phenomenon given rise to inequalities of support within metropolitan areas?

Finding: Support for the schools in Birmingham tends to arise from the more active, group participating members of the community, while non-support is associated with the more isolated and anomic citizens. To the extent that this condition prevails in other communities, it could be observed that the greater the integration of the community, the greater the support for the schools.

Question: What can the schools contribute to the integration of the community? Do the schools have a responsibility to think of their function in broadened terms? Is it desirable to conceive of school programs carried on after the close of the regular school day which would offer school plant, facilities, and programs to all the people in the community? In brief, to what extent is it possible and desirable to activate currently anomic community members in the ongoing group affairs of the community?

APPENDIX A

Table A-1

APPROXIMATE SAMPLING ERRORS OF PERCENTAGES*
(Expressed in percentages)

Reported percentage	Number of Interviews				
	500	400	300	200	100
50	4.5	5.0	5.8	7.1	10.0
30 or 70	4.1	4.6	5.3	6.5	9.2
20 or 80	3.6	4.0	4.6	5.7	8.0
10 or 90	2.7	3.0	3.5	4.2	6.0
5 or 95	1.9	2.2	2.5	3.1	

*The sampling error measures the sampling variability, that is, the variations that might occur by chance because only a sample of the population is surveyed. For most items the chances are 95 in 100 that the value being estimated (the percentage of people expressing a given attitude) lies within a range equal to the reported percentages plus or minus the sampling error.

The sampling error does not measure the total error involved in specific survey estimates since it does not include non-response and reporting errors.

APPENDIX B

Table A-2

SAMPLING ERRORS OF DIFFERENCES
(Expressed as percentages)

Size of sample or group	Size of sample or group				
	500	400	300	200	100
	For percentages from about 35 per cent to 65 per cent				
500	6.3	6.7	7.3	8.4	11.0
400	. . .	7.1	7.6	8.7	11.0
300	. . .	. . .	8.2	9.1	12.0
200	. . .	. . .	. . .	10.0	12.0
100	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . . .	14.0
	For percentages around 20 per cent and 80 per cent				
500	5.1	5.4	5.8	6.7	8.8
400	. . .	5.7	6.1	6.9	8.9
300	. . .	. . .	6.5	7.3	9.2
200	. . .	. . .	. . .	8.0	9.8
100	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .	11.0
	For percentages around 10 per cent and 90 per cent				
500	3.8	4.0	4.4	5.0	. . .
400	. . .	4.2	4.6	5.2	. . .
300	. . .	. . .	4.9	5.5	. . .
200	. . .	. . .	. . .	6.0	. . .
	For percentages around 5 per cent and 95 per cent				
500	2.8	2.9	3.2	3.6	. . .
400	. . .	3.1	3.3	3.8	. . .
300	. . .	. . .	3.6	4.0	. . .

*The values shown are the differences required for significance (95 per cent probability) in comparisons of percentages from two different subgroups.